# THE ARYAN PATH

VOLUME XXXVII - NO. 5

May 1966

EDITORIAL REPRINT from H. P. BLAVATSKY
The Perfect Law

CHARLES A. MOORE
The Old and the New in Philosophy

HOWARD SERGEANT
Religion in Modern British Poetry: The Preoccupation with Time

HARENDRA CHANDRA PAUL
Mystic Significances of the Madhu-Kaitava Myth

K. GURU DUTT
Society and the Individual

*BOOKS REVIEWED INCLUDE*

*Who Are the Parsees?; The Story of International Co-operation; Albert Schweitzer's Gift of Friendship; Cultural History from the Matsya Purāṇa; The Gorgeous East: One Man's India; A Psychiatrist Discovers India; The Doctrine of the Buddha; The Saga of the Volsungs*

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Editor:
SOPHIA WADIA

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# THE ARYAN PATH

Point out the "Way" — however dimly, and
lost among the host — as does the evening star
to those who tread their path in darkness.

— *The Voice of the Silence*

VOL. XXXVII MAY 1966 No. 5

## The Perfect Law

[The Full Moon of the month of Vaiśākha in the Hindu lunar year is Buddha Pūrṇimā — a most blessed date which falls this year on the 4th of May. It marks the sacred and triple anniversary of the Birth, the Enlightenment, and the Passing of Lord Buddha. Our reverential salutations to the Great Master, the Fully Enlightened One!

The month of May is always a sacred one for students of Theosophy, as it was on the 8th of May, in the year 1891, that Madame H. P. Blavatsky passed from the body she had used for nearly sixty years. The date is observed as White Lotus Day and brings an inspiration all its own.

Thus, this year, Buddha Jayanti and White Lotus Day come very close to each other and this will enhance their value for all those who will reflect on their significance and make more potent their beneficent influence upon mankind.

As a tribute to H. P. Blavatsky we give below longish extracts from *The Secret Doctrine*, her monumental work and the text-book of Theosophy *par excellence* for our generation. The passages are from the section, in Volume I, on "Cyclic Evolution and Karma." They deal with the Great Law both in the metaphysical and the practical aspects and indicate the means of removing much of the sorrow and the misery of the world.—ED.]

The real devotee is one who is wise and knows what is good for himself. He has grasped the meaning of the Place of Peace.

He is upright and straight; gentle of speech and mild; free from vanity and conceit.

He is full of contentment, easily satisfied; of few wants and frugal appetites. Senses controlled, speech not insolent, not greedy for gifts.

He must be wise enough not to be censured by other wise men.

And such a devotee has earned the right to pray thus:

"As a mother, even at the risk of her own life, protects her son, her only son, so let there be good will without measure among all beings.

Let good will without measure prevail in the whole world, above, below, around, unstinted, unmixed with any feeling of differing or opposing interests."

—*Metta Sutta*

To become a Buddha one has to break through the bondage of sense and personality; to acquire a complete perception of the REAL SELF and learn not to separate it from all other selves; to learn by experience the utter unreality of all phenomena of the visible Kosmos foremost of all; to reach a complete detachment from all that is evanescent and finite, and live while yet on Earth in the immortal and the everlasting alone, in a supreme state of holiness.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY: *The Theosophical Glossary*

...AT THE FIRST FLUTTER of renascent life, Svabhavat, "the mutable radiance of the Immutable Darkness unconscious in Eternity," passes, at every new rebirth of Kosmos, from an inactive state into one of intense activity; ... it differentiates, and then begins its work through that differentiation. This work is KARMA.

The Cycles are also subservient to the effects produced by this activity. "The one Cosmic atom becomes seven atoms on the plane of matter, and each is transformed into a centre of energy; that same atom becomes seven rays on the plane of spirit, and the seven creative forces of nature, radiating from the root-essence ... follow, one the right, the other the left path, separate till the end of the Kalpa, and yet are in close embrace. What unites them? KARMA." The atoms emanated from the Central Point emanate in their turn new centres of energy, which, under the potential breath of *Fohat,* begin their work from within without, and multiply other minor centres. These, in the course of evolution and involution, form in their turn the roots or developing causes of new effects, from worlds and "man-bearing" globes, down to the genera, species, and classes of all the *seven* kingdoms (of which *we know only four*). For "the blessed workers have received the *Thyan-kam,* in the eternity" (Book of "The Aphorisms of *Tson-ka-pa*").

"Thyan-kam" is the power or knowledge of guiding the impulses of cosmic energy in the right direction....

According to the teachings, Maya, or the illusive appearance of the marshalling of events and actions on this earth, changes, varying with nations and places. But the chief features of one's life are always in accordance with the "Constellation" one is born under, or, we should say, with the characteristics of its animating principle or the deity that presides over it, whether we call it a *Dhyan Chohan,* as in Asia, or an Archangel, as with the Greek and Latin churches. In ancient Symbolism it was always the SUN (though the Spiritual, not the visible, Sun was meant), that was

supposed to send forth the chief Saviours and Avatars. Hence the connecting link between the Buddhas, the Avatars, and so many other incarnations of the highest SEVEN. The closer the approach to one's *Prototype,* "in Heaven," the better for the mortal whose personality was chosen, by his own *personal* deity (the seventh principle), as its terrestrial abode. For, with every effort of will toward purification and unity with that "Self-god," one of the lower rays breaks and the spiritual entity of man is drawn higher and ever higher to the ray that supersedes the first, until, from ray to ray, the inner man is drawn into the one and highest beam of the Parent-SUN. Thus, "the events of humanity *do* run co-ordinately with the number forms," since the single units of that humanity proceed one and all from the same source — the *central* and its *shadow,* the visible SUN. For the equinoxes and solstices, the periods and various phases of the Solar course, astronomically and numerically expressed, are only the concrete symbols of the eternally living verity, though they do seem *abstract ideas* to uninitiated mortals. And this explains the extraordinary numerical coincidences with geometrical relations, as shown by several authors.

Yes; "our destiny is written in the stars!" Only, the closer the union between the mortal reflection MAN and his celestial PROTOTYPE, the less dangerous the external conditions and subsequent reincarnations — which neither Buddhas nor Christs can escape. This is not superstition, least of all is it *Fatalism.* The latter implies a blind course of some still blinder power, and man is a free agent during his stay on earth. He cannot escape his *ruling* Destiny, but he has the choice of two paths that lead him in that direction, and he can reach the goal of misery — if such is decreed to him, either in the snowy white robes of the Martyr, or in the soiled garments of a volunteer in the iniquitous course; for, there are *external and internal conditions* which affect the determination of our will upon our actions, and it is in our power to follow either of the two. Those who believe in *Karma* have to believe in *destiny,* which, from birth to death, every man is weaving thread by thread around himself, as a spider does his cobweb; and this destiny is guided either by the heavenly voice of the invisible *prototype* outside of us, or by our more intimate *astral,* or inner man, who is but too often the evil genius of the embodied entity called man. Both these lead on the outward man, but one of them must prevail; and from the very beginning of the invisible affray the stern and implacable *law of compensation* steps in and takes its course, faithfully following the fluctuations. When the last strand is woven, and man is seemingly enwrapped in the net-work of his own doing, then he finds himself completely under the empire of this *self-made destiny.* It then either fixes him like the inert shell against the immovable rock, or carries him away like

a feather in a whirlwind raised by his own actions, and this is — KARMA.

...Nemesis is without attributes; that while the dreaded goddess is absolute and immutable as a Principle, it is we ourselves — nations and individuals — who propel her to action and give the impulse to its direction. KARMA-NEMESIS is the creator of nations and mortals, but once created, it is they who make of her either a fury or a rewarding Angel. Yea —

"Wise are they who worship Nemesis"*

— as the *chorus* tells Prometheus. And as unwise they, who believe that the goddess may be propitiated by whatever sacrifices and prayers, or have her wheel diverted from the path it has once taken. "The triform Fates and ever mindful Furies" are her attributes only on earth, and begotten by ourselves. There is no return from the paths she cycles over; yet those paths are of our own making, for it is we, collectively or individually, who prepare them. Karma-Nemesis is the synonym of PROVIDENCE, minus *design,* goodness, and every other *finite* attribute and qualification, so unphilosophically attributed to the latter. An Occultist or a philosopher will not speak of the goodness or cruelty of Providence; but, identifying it with Karma-Nemesis, he will teach that nevertheless it guards the good and watches over them in this, as in future lives; and that it punishes the evil-doer — aye, even to his seventh rebirth. So long, in short, as the effect of his having thrown into perturbation even the smallest atom in the Infinite World of harmony, has not been finally readjusted. For the only decree of Karma — an eternal and immutable decree — is absolute Harmony in the world of matter as it is in the world of Spirit. It is not, therefore, Karma that rewards or punishes, but it is we, who reward or punish ourselves according to whether we work with, through and along with nature, abiding by the laws on which that Harmony depends, or — break them.

Nor would the ways of Karma be inscrutable were men to work in union and harmony, instead of disunion and strife. For our ignorance of those ways — which one portion of mankind calls the ways of Providence, dark and intricate; while another sees in them the action of blind Fatalism; and a third, simple chance, with neither gods nor devils to guide them — would surely disappear, if we would but attribute all these to their correct cause. With right knowledge, or at any rate with a confident conviction that our neighbours will no more work to hurt us than we would think of harming them, the two-thirds of the World's evil would vanish into thin air.

H. P. BLAVATSKY

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*Who *dread* Karma-Nemesis would be better.

CHARLES A. MOORE

# The Old and the New in Philosophy

[Dr. Charles A. Moore is an old friend of THE ARYAN PATH who has often written especially on topics connected with problems of East-West understanding. He is a distinguished senior teacher of philosophy and was a couple of years ago chairman of The Fourth East-West Philosophers' Conference. He writes in some perturbation of the spirit at certain unwise views that seem to have taken by storm many of the academic citadels of philosophy. Nevertheless, he writes with exemplary moderation, though he speaks plainly and with deep, sincere feeling. He points out gently that the truth is neither on the side of the old nor on that of the new in philosophy: it is likeliest to reward the quest of those who neglect no source from which wisdom may come merely because of its chronological age or because of its hemispheric origin. Dr. Moore's article reminds us of fundamental ideas which ought to be self-evident and yet never allowed to slip our minds.—ED.]

THE CHARGE OF BIAS MAY BE LEVELLED AGAINST THE "OLD MAN" WHO IS WRITING THIS PAPER, BUT THE POINT MUST BE MADE — AND JUDGED ON ITS MERITS.

The many-sided contemporary emphasis upon youth and newness — in the name of novelty, adventuresomeness, courage, and even alleged superior knowledge and wisdom — has proved its seriousness and dangerousness throughout the world and in all areas of life. Its "take-over" intent and capacity are apparently more serious than ever before:

> The younger the wiser; the newer the truer.... Youth is king... we all seem to be engaged in the headlong, intoxicating race to see who can look, act, live [and think] the youngest.... We are living in a "filiarchy" in every area of life....

— and philosophy is no exception. Abandonment of all that is traditional, disrespect for the maturity and experience of elders, ridicule for the old in practically all matters of convention and thought, are the rule of the day.

The typical "sophomoric" rebellion seems now to be taken in all seriousness. When *students* can determine the fate of governments and nations and, with all the immaturity of youth, are permitted to dictate educational programmes and policies to great universities; when established and substantial professors have to change universities because of the sarcasm of the young or the devastation of substantial progress because of a "take-over" by the newest movements; we should be able to see the seriousness, the danger, and the unwisdom of what is happening.

In philosophy, the completely iconoclastic "age of youth" is a tragedy, for the young and new apparently threaten to take control of the minds

of men and even of the problems — and the very essence — of philosophy throughout the world. This can be disastrous, if man is still concerned with truth.

In philosophy, the facts and their implications are most serious. The world is more in need of sound philosophy and concern for ultimates now than ever. Professor William Ernest Hocking has spoken well to this point:

> No metaphysics retains today its full traditional force; and yet no traditional metaphysics has lost its contemporary importance.[1]

Also:

> We have to learn from the Orient the practical significance of metaphysics. A race of people who could beget so jejune a scheme of thought as logical positivism, which declares metaphysical problems meaningless, has every reason to listen quietly to the mind of the Orient.[2]

And he speaks, too, and wisely, of "the philosophical task [the task of metaphysics], *never so urgent as today. . . .*"[3] But the contemporary world faces a predicament in which metaphysics is generally abandoned, since even its problems are basically meaningless; in which idealism is out of fashion and out of mind; and in which the only philosophies which seem to concern the minds of students — and of many scholars, too — are what might in other fields be called "fringe" developments, philosophies of desperation, futility, and despair, or philosophies of practicality without any concern for basic truth or truths — and involving even the abandonment of reason itself. The wisdom of the ages is now thought of as the wisdom of the aged — and therefore of no concern or value to contemporary man. "Eternal verities" (like "the wisdom of the ages") are almost a contradiction in terms.

Man has repeatedly realized and noted that an idea is not necessarily incorrect simply because it is old and not necessarily sound simply because it is new. Certainly the age of an idea does not necessarily condemn it; but, similarly, certainly the newness of an idea, or of a philosophical approach, does not necessarily or automatically validate it. Until recently, ideas have been examined and accepted or rejected on the basis of factual accuracy and logical cogency and soundness — not chronological age. Similarly, "young-mindedness" as an admirable trait in a thinker (philosophical and otherwise) has not referred to youth in years.

In the contemporary West, words (semantics, linguistics, grammar,

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[1] "Value of the Comparative Study of Philosophy," in CHARLES A. MOORE (ed.): *Philosophy—East and West* (Princeton University Press. 1944), p. 1

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 5

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 11 (Italics mine)

and the like) have replaced ideas. The history of philosophy is of merely antiquarian interest, if that. The great thinkers of tradition are dead — in both senses. Even the classical problems that have concerned man ever since he began to think about himself, his life, and his world are either no longer of concern to modern, practical man, or must await endless analysis of every word and phrase. "Divide and conquer" is the new shibboleth. Socrates *quite a while ago* fostered this *then* new point of philosophy — "define your terms." Contemporary philosophers — not all, of course — have made this pretty much the whole of philosophy, with the thought that it is their invention. "Define your terms" is as old as the hills. It is merely the beginning of philosophy, not the goal — but it may well be the "end," if we stop there.

For example: in the most philosophical country in the world, India, fewer students are studying philosophy today than ever before — it is out of date and a waste of time. And many of India's most promising younger philosophers are merely conforming to the latest trends in Western philosophy! In China, of course, all *genuine* philosophy and the *free* search for truth are dead. In America, those students who find value and interest in philosophy want to know what they can *do* with it — what is its practical value? This is the modern perspective.

Several assumptions or reasons seem to be involved here.

For one thing, the current tendency looks like a duplication of the state of mind and of philosophy following the great advances of the sciences in the era of the Renaissance. At that time, the great successes of science put to naught the significance of traditional philosophy and religion and inaugurated an age of newness, adventuresomeness, and discovery. Something like this situation holds today, and with even less validity. Progress in science is exciting and valuable, but it has little to do with the validity and truth of those concepts and attitudes which go deeper than scientific knowledge — science is still limited in scope and method. Knowledge is still knowledge; and wisdom is still wisdom. Knowledge of nature is still merely that; concern with ultimates, with problems of metaphysics, with the nature and values of man, is still the basic need of truth-seeking (and truth-needing) mankind; and that is the work of philosophy.

Another — possibly the major — assumption seems to be that the young-minded, chronologically speaking, are the sound-minded. True, young-mindedness, in the better sense, is indispensable to open-mindedness; but this does not mean that maturity cannot accompany philosophical young-mindedness.

Some traditional ideas may well be "out of date," but much of contemporary philosophy is petty, superficial, lacking in depth, often not

even philosophy, but semantics, linguistics, mathematics, etc.

The popular trick is to ignore centuries of philosophizing and redefine philosophy overnight — to suit one's latest interests — and then condemn all that fails to fit that definition.

Perhaps this "anti" or negative or opposition psychology is merely a part or continuation of the new "isms," from the days of Schopenhauer's irrationalism and pessimism to existentialism's basis in futility and frustration and its response in a denial of reason and rationality.

Perhaps there is — as there was in the era after Aristotle — simply a lack of intellectual substance and an absence of ability and insight to contribute further to the positive and constructive wisdom of man. Perhaps the Western mind has been drained of its substance for further progress — and must turn to the "jejune," the "bizarre."

In the conviction that this last is a part of the problem, one dares to mention the availability of the makings of a new — and very different — renaissance in philosophy, a reservoir or storehouse of highly significant new ideas, in the vast ranges of the great Asian philosophies. Here, new perspectives, new insights, new suggestions, new facets of truth, abound — to replenish the starved mind of the contemporary, negative West. More on this later.

Exclusive attention to traditional ideas and points of view, without thinking of them in proper contemporary perspective, is undoubtedly an unacceptable attitude, and one which is often adopted by the old-minded. To think of the past as the sacred past, the unexaminable or unchallengeable past, is certainly unphilosophical. Changes there must be, of course. But changes and new ideas do not come from a vacuum, nor can they be thought of in a vacuum, nor should they be examined in a vacuum. Tradition and the past provide the basis of the totality of which new ideas might become a significant part.

The procedure recommended here is to understand and appreciate the basic traditional points of view, and then look at the present and even into the future in the light of the deep-seated past. To the young and "modern" philosopher, there is no need for an explanation or exploration of the past. It is necessary to look only at the present and then, if necessary, speculate about the future. The "answer" was given by Dr. Tara Chand, the eminent Indian scholar, educator, and diplomat, who put the wisdom of the ages and of history in a nutshell when he said,

> ... it has to be remembered that Indian thought and institutions emerged thousands of years ago and possess an unbroken continuity. The situation of today is indissolubly linked with that of yesterday and the day before. No understanding of contemporary India is, therefore, possible without knowl-

edge of the past.[4]

The wisdom of this remark is not limited to India.

History and a knowledge of history are indispensable to an understanding of the present, and certainly to any significant prospective speculation about the future. We cannot know the present unless we know the past from which it was derived. This would seem to stand more solidly in philosophy even than in history. It has been said that we must learn from the mistakes of history. We must learn from the mistakes in the history of philosophy, too; but we must also realize that not all in the history of philosophy is mistaken. There is great wisdom in the history of philosophy, and the presumption that the little minds of today are wiser than the great minds of the ages is a youthful presumption, to put it mildly.

The writer has been concerned for a very long time with two goals in the field of East-West philosophy: that of *mutual understanding* and that of *total perspective in philosophy* (versus traditional bias and narrowness of perspective).

If we are interested in mutual understanding between the peoples of Asia and the peoples of the West, we must know about the thought-tradition of the past in each case, because no people can possibly be known or understood out of the context of its history. Nor can there be a truly significant cultural or ideational revolution which brings in the wholly new and wholly abandons the old.

Even the leaders of Chinese communism are trying desperately to locate (or manufacture) within the tradition and the history of China philosophical foundations for their contemporary movement. Sometimes they contend that communism in China represents what Confucius really intended. Sometimes they find or make up previously unnoticed materialistic movements in the history of Chinese philosophy to fortify the materialism of communism. They realize that, even if one has guns and power to force or at least influence the minds of the people, one must still reckon with tradition. Theirs, they claim, is *Chinese* communism.

If one is interested, not so much in mutual understanding between the peoples of the East and the peoples of the West, but in the development of what might be called total perspective in philosophy, or the most comprehensive philosophy men can achieve, then it is both foolhardy and foolish to abandon the great wisdom of the past. The study of the history of philosophy, East and West, is not to be identified with anti-

[4] In a paper entitled "The Individual in the Legal and Political Thought and Institutions of India," presented at the Fourth East-West Philosophers' Conference held at the University of Hawaii during the summer of 1964, p. 1 (This paper will be published in the Proceedings volume of the Conference to be published by the University of Hawaii in late 1966 or early 1967.)

quarianism. It is essential. It is the record of man's progressive search for the truth. The great thinkers of the past have made substantial contributions to the sum-total of man's knowledge and wisdom. Philosophy demands such totality — past and present, East and West. Why start all over again — especially when that start seems to be in the direction of insignificance, futility, or mere practicality? Can anyone seriously believe that the great thinkers of India, China, and the West were all fools — that they had nothing to say? And yet, that is what the revolutionary philosophers of today are saying.

To attempt to understand the present without knowledge of the past is philosophically impossible and intellectually ridiculous. Professor H. G. Creel, of the University of Chicago, has said:

> To understand China, one must start at least as early as Confucius.... One must consider the great thinkers because they have played a principal part in making China what she is.... One must know something about China's traditional thought even to understand Chinese Communist theory....[5]

It is rather naïve to imagine that current social developments or innovations (and their philosophical foundations), which, to all intents and purposes, completely "violate" the past, can really survive, without at least so distorting the minds and lives of the people as to destroy the very ideas and ideals which constitute their social integrity and national identity. Examples are the communes in China versus the traditional family system, the allegedly full-blown democracy of contemporary Japan in violation of a very largely monistic or "group-oriented" tradition, and the effort on the part of some to develop industrialization and technology and to forget the idealism and spirituality of traditional India, etc.

If one were to impose upon India, for example, a drastic change in the direction of democracy and a drastic change in the direction of emphasis upon the material welfare of the Indian people without any basis for such ideas and ideals in India's tradition, nothing but confusion could be foreseen. The fact of the matter is, however, that both basic democracy and a serious concern for, let us say, the general welfare of the people are intrinsic parts of the comprehensive fundamental tradition of Indian culture — and therefore both stand a good chance of survival, despite great obstacles and opposition from the outside.

If such institutions are to succeed or survive, they will have to survive in the light of their place in the total value-pattern inherited from their respective traditions. Otherwise, chaos or at least instability will prevail.

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[5] Quoted in a news release by the publisher, the New American Library of World Literature, Inc., New York, in announcing the publication of CREEL's *Chinese Thought*, published in 1966

All new institutions will unquestionably and necessarily be moulded in form — and in diversity — by the traditions from which they have been derived and in which they are being developed. Whether they finally prove viable, history alone will tell; but tradition will largely determine the answer.

Surely, changes can be made and should be made. Surely, improvement is constantly called for. Undoubtedly, the past has been excessive in some of its emphases. But changes and improvements must be envisaged in terms of the intellectual and social milieu into which they are to be planted. The old order changeth, yes, but it does not just disappear, and wishing so will not make it disappear.

Another part of the explanation of the current exaggeration of or emphasis upon youth and newness and novelty of ideas in philosophy may be the wide-spread frustration — and even fear — which exists in the minds of so many people throughout the world today, perhaps especially the young. This stems from the unprecedented and very real dangers and fears for which tradition and the older generation might well be blamed in the eyes of the younger generation. But this craving for totally new ideas and approaches and solutions is short-sighted. It is a frantic and desperate way out of a difficult predicament. It is not the intelligent way.

The outstanding President of the University of Hawaii recently said:

> No great society will emerge unless our institutions of higher learning do a better job than they are now doing in preserving the valid knowledge of the past, discovering the new, and disseminating both.[6]

This is sound perspective for thinking people — for philosophers and for all those whose social and political policies are grounded in sound philosophical perspectives.

CHARLES A. MOORE

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PHILOSOPHY is the highest music.

—PLATO: *Phaedo*

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[6] Unpublished statement in recent public lecture

HOWARD SERGEANT

# Religion in Modern British Poetry: The Preoccupation with Time

[We had occasion to recall the literary abilities and the excellent editorial work of Mr. Howard Sergeant in introducing his article "Religion in Modern British Poetry: The Influence of T. S. Eliot" in our February issue. We have pleasure in printing below another study in an aspect of religion in modern British poetry. As Mr. Sergeant points out, modern thinkers have offered from both the philosophical and the scientific points of view challenging ideas on the subject of time. Mr. Sergeant's study of some of the ways in which these ideas have influenced modern literature is of great interest.

—ED.]

IN AN ESSAY previously published in THE ARYAN PATH I discussed some of the problems confronting modern poets. One of the problems to which I referred was the impact of science on religious ideas, and I observed:

> In weakening the foundations of religious belief in the latter part of the nineteenth century, science devalued what for earlier periods had been a stable currency in Christian symbolism, and deprived the poet of the traditional pattern of values by which his experience of both inner and outer worlds could be integrated and conveyed to his public.[1]

So that, to give shape and significance to his work it became necessary for him not only to acquire a system of symbols adequate to the task of communicating what he had to say, but also to create a myth or framework of values within the scope of which his symbols could have their full effect. Even if his own religious faith remained secure, the poet found that the Christian symbols and terminology had lost much of their power to evoke the desired response, unless they could be used in a new way or in an unusual context, as, for example, in Dylan Thomas's "Vision and Prayer":

I turn the corner of prayer and burn
In a blessing of the sudden
Sun. In the name of the damned
I would turn back and run
To the hidden land
But the loud sun
Christens down
The sky.

---

[1] "The Nature of Meaning in Poetry: An English Approach," THE ARYAN PATH, April-May 1963, p. 158

I
Am found
O let Him
Scald me and drown
Me in his world's wound.
His lightning answers my
Cry. My voice burns in his hand
Now I am lost in the blinding
One. The sun roars at the prayer's end.

Yet if science had the effect of weakening conventional religious concepts, it also brought new ideas which have helped to change the pattern of our thoughts and belief in such a way as to bring us back to fundamentals. Take, for example, the notion of time. Although for centuries mystics and philosophers have speculated on the nature of time, the conventional (because the practical) view was that it was a fourth dimension, measurable by the calendar and the clock, the past already experienced being separated from the unexperienced future by a continually moving instant of perception recognized as the present. Unlike the dimensions of space, however, the time dimension permitted movement in one direction only. What was in the ever-growing past had gone beyond all hope of recovery, though it might be recalled to memory, and what was still in the future could not be determined except by supernatural means. From the beginning to the end of his life, man had to follow his own track. This gave rise to the popular conception of time as the spoiler of youth, ambition, and beauty; symbol of transitoriness and decay; and associate of Death; so often celebrated in our poetry, if varied according to the mood and temperament of the poet:

Ruin hath taught me thus to ruminate—
That Time will come and take my love away.
(SHAKESPEARE: "Time and Love")

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying:
And this same flower that smiles today,
Tomorrow will be dying.
(HERRICK: "Counsel to Girls")

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike th'inevitable hour:—
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.
(GRAY: "Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard")

In an essay published in 1887 Henri Bergson proposed to substitute for the traditional idea his conception of time as duration; that is, as life

experienced in a continual state of "becoming," a present not regulated by clocks or calendars but by the intensity of consciousness, to which the whole of the past contributes. Then came Einstein's Relativity Theory which, in proving that both time and space are relative to the observer, demolished the idea of absolute time and space. A few years later Minkowsky, following the Einsteinian line of thought, disposed of the notion that the time dimension was qualitatively distinct from the three dimensions of space, and introduced the concept of the space-time continuum. Working in another sphere altogether, psychologists have found that the dreaming mind is free from the restrictions of time and space which operate under normal waking conditions — the unconscious, it seems, can range freely in time without reference to chronological sequence. To make the situation even more complicated, J. W. Dunne has been led by his researches to propound a theory of *serial* time, presented to a *serial* observer, by which he claims not only to account for the precognitive and multi-dimensional activity of dream-life, but also to answer the questions posed by modern physics and psychology. It is not without significance that Dunne's theory allows for the existence of "an individual soul which has a definite beginning in absolute time," and lends weight to the religious belief in "the unity of all flesh in the Superbody and of all minds in the Master-mind." If Ouspensky, on the other hand, is content to postulate a time which, like space, has but three dimensions, he raises difficulties of his own by submitting that time, for each of us, is a sort of vicious circle which we enter at birth and leave at death, and by rebirth re-enter at another point to follow the same old pattern of thought, inclination, and action, unless the circle itself can be changed into a spiral through the spiritual reorientation of the individual. It will be seen how close this is to Eastern religious thought.

To enumerate these various theories in this brief manner, as the requirements of my subject compel me to do, gives little indication of the stimulating effect they have had upon the writers of the twentieth century, or of the extent to which they have been reflected in the literature of the period, once they had been absorbed and applied to particular modes of expression; but it will readily be appreciated that such challenging ideas, especially when supported by science and physics, must inevitably attract the attention of creative minds. To such ideas can be traced the numerous attempts, in the portrayal of character, to convey the reality of the inner state of being, freed from the domination of time, by means of the interior monologue and the "stream of consciousness" method of writing. Their influence can be discerned in the techniques adopted by Aldous Huxley in his *Eyeless in Gaza* and William Faulkner in his *The Sound and the Fury* (to mention two volumes out of many) no less than

in the deliberate choice of thematic material as in Priestley's *I Have Been Here Before,* a play based upon a modification of Ouspensky's concept of the "circle of recurrence"; but in prose they operate at their deepest level in the work of Virginia Woolf, Marcel Proust, and James Joyce.

In modern poetry, too, there is this preoccupation with timelessness, this groping towards a time beyond that plotted out for us in terms of days, hours, and minutes, as well as the traditional attitudes to which we are accustomed. Eliot's *Four Quartets* provide an excellent illustration:

> And under the oppression of the silent fog
> The tolling bell
> Measures time not our time, rung by the unhurried
> Ground swell, a time
> Older than the time of chronometers, older
> Than time counted by anxious worried women
> Lying awake, calculating the future,
> Trying to unweave, unwind, unravel,
> And piece together the past and the future
> Between midnight and dawn, when the past is all deception,
> The future futureless, before the morning watch
> When time stops and time is never ending;
> And the ground swell, that is and was from the beginning,
> Clangs
> The bell.
>
> ("The Dry Salvages")

Yet because any speculation about the nature of time in relation to man's life, or to eternity, must at some stage involve a consideration of birth and death — it is on this common ground that science and mysticism seem to have established points of contact and may, in the future, come even closer together — we find, more often than not, that the poet is compelled to follow his theme into the realm of metaphysics. In *Four Quartets* there are several passages which indicate the author's familiarity with the ideas of Bergson, Ouspensky, and Dunne, among others, or which can be identified with the physicist's space-time continuum. But Eliot is concerned not only with man's existence *in* time, but also with man's redemption *from* time, and, having pondered over the findings of science and psychology, and taken from them what he can, he dismisses them as too limited in scope for his purpose with the same gesture with which he brushes aside the expedients of spiritualism, astrology, and fortune-telling by palmistry, cards, and tea-cups.

> To explore the womb, or tomb, or dreams; all these are usual
> Pastimes and drugs, and features of the press:
> And always will be. . . .

Men's curiosity searches past and future
And clings to that dimension.

From scientific research and philosophy he turns to religion for greater understanding, to express what is essentially a Christian point of view:

But to apprehend
The point of intersection of the timeless
With time, is an occupation for the saint—
No occupation either, but something given
And taken, in a lifetime's death in love,
Ardour and selflessness and self-surrender.
For most of us, there is only the unattended
Moment, the moment in and out of time,
The distraction fit, lost in a shaft of sunlight,
The wild thyme unseen, or the winter lightning
Or the waterfall, or music heard so deeply
That it is not heard at all, but you are the music
While the music lasts. These are only hints and guesses,
Hints followed by guesses; and the rest
Is prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action.
The hint half guessed, the gift half understood, is Incarnation.
Here the impossible union
Of spheres of existence is actual,
Here the past and future
Are conquered, and reconciled. . . .

In "The Transfiguration" Edwin Muir deals with another aspect of the problem, again from the Christian standpoint. After imagining the reaction of the disciples to a world miraculously changed for an instant, he gives his version of the transcendent reality of time — past, present, and future contained in one:

In our own time,
Some say, or at a time when time is ripe,
Then he will come, Christ the uncrucified,
Christ the discrucified, his death undone,
His agony unmade, his cross dismantled—
Glad to be so — and the tormented wood
Will cure its hurt and grow into a tree
In a green springing corner of young Eden,
And Judas damned take his long journey backward
From darkness into light and be a child
Beside his mother's knee, and the betrayal
Be quite undone and never more be done.

In some respects our age is not unlike that of the seventeenth century, which may partly account for the fact that the Metaphysical poet, John

Donne, is held in higher esteem today than ever before; for in Donne's work we can discern a sense of insecurity arising, in principle, from similar causes to our own:

> And the new Philosophy calls all in doubt
> The Element of fire is quite put out;
> The Sun is lost, and th'earth, and no man's wit
> Can well direct him where to look for it.
> And freely men confess that this world's spent
> When in the Planets, and the Firmament
> They seek so many new; they see that this
> Is crumbled out again to his Atomies.
> 'Tis all in pieces, all coherence gone;
> All just supply, and all Relation. . . .
> ("An Anatomy of the World," 1611.)

The seventeenth century exhibited the rapid accumulation of scientific knowledge. Kepler and Galileo, with the aid of the newly-invented telescope, were searching the skies and their observations were disturbing deeply rooted notions of the universe. Anatomists and physiologists were making equally exciting discoveries about the human body. The long conflict between opposing ideologies, symbolized by King and Parliament, developed into an open warfare which divided the nation. Out of it all, the flux and the ferment, the speculation and controversy, a new philosophical outlook was gradually emerging.

Yet in other respects our age is very different. However confusing and unsettling the new knowledge may have been, Donne and his contemporaries could, at least, still fall back upon a strong religious faith, upon convictions so potent in the everyday lives of the people that scores of religious sects were formed during the period. For us of the twentieth century scientific materialism had, almost before we were born, already undermined the doctrines handed down to us, and had done little to replace them. Nor can any mood of the seventeenth century be equated with the sense of fear and anxiety dominating life today, after two world wars and with the distinct possibility of a third in which nuclear forces of destruction may well put an end to civilization as we know it.

HOWARD SERGEANT

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HARENDRA CHANDRA PAUL

# Mystic Significances of the Madhu-Kaitava Myth

[Professor Harendra Chandra Paul, M.A., D.LITT., makes a solid and sustained attempt to interpret the story about the demons Madhu and Kaiṭava who were destroyed by Viṣṇu under the aegis of Caṇḍī, one of the forms of the goddess who represents the ultimate Root of Nature, and even, in some interpretations, the One Life itself. The interpretation invites us to follow a subtle argument which explains the war of Madhu and Kaiṭava against the Lord in terms of the inner experiences of the mystic striving to master separative selfhood and gather his whole nature together in an act of offering to the one united Spirit of Life.—ED.]

WHILE NARRATING *Devī-māhātmya* (lit., the Greatness of the Goddess) to the good soul, Suratha, his spiritual guide, the wise Medhasa, describes some miraculous achievements of the Goddess Caṇḍī, who is both *Mahāmāyā* (Great Illusion) and *Mahāvidyā* (Great Enlightenment), deluding or inspiring Her surrendering devotees, as the occasion might arise, towards the realization of the Self. And of these great achievements, the first is the slaying of the two great *Asuras* (demons) *Madhu* and *Kaiṭava*. In the surface story this great fight, a straight contention with arms between Hari or Viṣṇu on one side and the two great demons on the other, continued for five thousand years (*pañcavarṣasahasrāṇi*), and its result was the death of Madhu and Kaiṭava, who, being deluded by Her power, offered Keśava (Viṣṇu) a boon, in reply to which he requested them to surrender, if they were really pleased with the battle he had given them. Finding themselves not adapted to the situation — the world being full of water (*sarvamāpomayam*) — they requested the Lord Viṣṇu to kill them in a vastness that was not inundated (*na yatrorvī salilena pariplutā*). Accordingly, the Lord, the possessor of *śaṅkha* (conch-shell), *cakra* (discus), and *gadā* (mace), cut off their heads with his *cakra* after placing them on his lap.

Spiritually, Madhu is pleasure or joyous attitude, and Kaiṭava, the sense of plurality. Both the abstractions taken together will mean, according to Vaiṣṇava philosophy, "*ekoham bahusyāma,*" the craving of the One to be Many. In the gradual development of his soul, Suratha, the pupil, has now come to a position where he sees the flashes of divinity as parcelled out. All these great holy wars of the *Caṇḍī* that are taken in its ordinary sense to have happened between the goddess *Mahāmāyā* and the great *asuras* in a distant age are explained spiritually as the conflicts in the gradual development of the soul before it merges finally in the Self. *Asura*, though taken generally to denote a demon, an enemy of the gods (*surāḥ*), comes originally from *ahura,* meaning one with life, i.e.,

the animated soul. It is deluded into life by the mercy of *Mahāmāyā* so that She may be understood or realized through it. The One is the unity of the Self; but She appears in various forms for the satisfaction of the craving soul. But when the sanctified soul, like Suratha, is going to be merged with Her eternally, he cannot be so united before he surrenders his extended pleasures to the Self that pervades the Within and the Without.

As to the origin of Madhu and Kaiṭava, it is said by the Seer:

> When the powerful Lord Viṣṇu was in a state of absorption in the Self, resting on his last separate entity at the end of a *kalpa* (i.e., during the progressive dissolution of the universe in the Self—*pralayakāle*), and (thus) the world was made one ocean with the Self (*ekārṇavīkṛta*), at that time the two great, fierce *Asuras*, Madhu and Kaiṭava, born out of the exudate from the ear (*karṇa-mala*) of Viṣṇu, endeavoured to kill Brahmā.

Viṣṇu is the indwelling Self (*antaryāmī*), for whose sake the world is evolved. He is the active consciousness (*cit*), that endows the soul with an existence (*prāṇa*). This *prāṇa* (or life) in its ecstatic mood is made to flow in one current to the Ocean of self with all its world of mental activities. But it is to be noted that this soul, the ever-flowing water of life, is not totally lost in the Self; he is yet resting himself on the water of causation (*kāraṇa-salila*), that separates his entity from the Self. The One has no entity other than the Self; but it is our presupposed ideas of the mind and soul that bring in all those complexities of cause and effect, as the result of which we are deprived of the unity of Self where reigns all-bliss. In the developed ecstatic mood, when the soul is in the emerging state of mind to be extinguished (*kalpānte*), it enjoys the pleasures of the Self parcelled out. For the final unity of the soul with the Self, the mind requires to be totally extinguished, so that Viṣṇu, the Lord of *prāṇa*, may be merged in the one supra-consciousness of the Self. And for this purpose the fierce (*ghora*) Asuras have been produced to extinguish Brahmā, the progenitor of mind, and root of all mental activities.

But that cannot be; for as yet the mind has its hankerings to enjoy the pleasure parcelled throughout the world. Therefore, the two *Asuras* have come out of the exudate from Viṣṇu's ear (*karṇa-mala*). But, spiritually, *karṇa* (the ear) is the symbol that brings out sounds and their expressions; and the impediment to all those expressions in the *cidākāśa* (the aether of consciousness) is the *karṇa-mala* of Viṣṇu. The product of this *mala* is represented as prompted to extinguish Brahmā, so that, being lost to all (outward) consciousness, the *prāṇa* may be united with the Self that is beyond all consciousness. The two *asuras* have thus been described as *ghora*, very fierce and dark. When Madhu and Kaiṭava find that they

are no more making any effect on the *cidākāśa*, of their own accord, they come forward to relieve themselves of the task of making Viṣṇu completely free from all consciousness by killing Brahmā. That supra-conscious One, Caṇḍī as *Nityā*, ever assists to make us one with Her, but it is our separate entities that obstruct us on the Way. It is recorded in the holy scripture:

> She is *Nitya*; this very world is Her stature and She extends Herself out everywhere. Yet hear from me the descriptions of Her birth through which She manifests Herself for the purpose of fulfilling the earnest desires of noble souls.

*Nityā*, the Ever-present One, shapes Her self into forms or takes separate entities, and then dissolves them into Her Self after a period of activity for them, which She initiates only for the proper realization of Her Self by noble souls.

When Brahmā finds the two *asuras* violent, and Viṣṇu absorbed in his ecstatic mood, he begins praising with a single heart the Mother-Goddess of the Universe (*Viśweśwarī*), who, while supporting the world (*Jagaddhātrī*) as an inspirer to lead the soul to his destination (*Harinetrakṛtālayā*), becomes the creator, protector, and destroyer of all existent things, so that that Unique One, the Goddess of all powers, who is also the cause of Viṣṇu's absorption in the Self, came to his succour. That One is not only the Goddess of all illusion and enlightenment, but also of all knowledge and forgetfulness, all attractions and distractions. She is the Great Goddess (*Mahādevī*) and *Mahā-āsurī*, the One possessed of all negative and positive aspects of life, or One that rules over all spirituality and materiality.[1]

Really the highest hypostasis is beyond description: all mental conceptions, and progressive states of the life and its consciousness, are alike unable to conceive of that One, who absorbs all and yet surpasses them. She is not one to be praised or adored. Yet if a devotee, with all attention to the Self, beseeches Her for succour with earnest desire, She comes to his help. And we also find that, being adored by Brahmā, that dark-coloured (*tāmasī*) Goddess appeared before him, born out of his eye, face, nose, heart, and breast, so that She might be visible to him, Brahmā, who is really never born or originated. This fierce dark-complexioned *Mahākālī* may appear in a corporeal form to a devotee, if he is all attention to the Self, when he will find that the Great Goddess who devours all time is evolving out of those parts of his body by which he has so long adored the Self. But in reality, though She may appear in a form, She is the breaker of all forms. Though She is the spouse of *Mahākāla*, yet She

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[1] *Āsuri* from *sura* (brilliance) may be taken also to mean the extending activities of the *deva*, that shines.

tramples under Her feet all time (*kāla*). For the sake of Her devotees, She limits Herself to time and space, though She is, in reality, beyond all forms and time. How beautifully this subtle theme has been expressed in a quotation in Pringle Pattison's *The Idea of God*!

> We that are not all,
> As parts can see but parts, now this, now that,
> And live perforce, from thought to thought and make
> One act a phantom of succession: thus
> Our weakness somehow shapes the shadow, Time. (p. 384)

And the real nature of that One has thus been so excellently described by the Persian mystic poet Rūmī:

> Both the *mushabbih* (one who asserts the Divine immanence in all beings and things of the world) and the *muwaḥḥid* (one who asserts the utter transcendence of God) are bewildered by Thee, O Thou, who art (really) without form appearing in so many forms. Sometimes the (conception of) *muwaḥḥad* (God as the only real being) is destroying the *mushabbih*; sometimes these forms lie in the way of the *muwaḥḥid*.[2]

Accordingly, the varying states of consciousness that make up the inner life of the mystic swing him to and fro between these two ways of contemplating Reality, so that he falls into bewilderment. Sometimes the multiplicity of phenomena throws a veil over the One whom they manifest, while at other times an overwhelming experience of the One blots out all the created forms of which the One is the Essence. That One is both immanent in all beings, and yet transcendent, being beyond the conception of human beings. All the strife and contention depicted in the myth are really between these two phases of the inner life of a noble soul, a mystic.

At the insinuation of *Mahāmāyā,* surpassingly beautiful from Her comprehension of all good things in Herself (*aśeṣasaumyebhyastwatisundarī*), the Lord of the World, Janārdana (Viṣṇu), rose from his absorption in the Self, and found that the most powerful and cruel-hearted Madhu-Kaiṭava were about to devour Brahmā.

The inner situation represented may be described thus: though the soul is absorbed in the Self, his life and mind are not wholly resolved in the Self, which position may be called, according to Yogic phraseology, *savikalpa samādhi* (meditation in which the subject-object polarity has not been transcended). Though the *prāṇa* is oriented to the Self, it has not yet totally given up all its desires; it is only for the time being flowing concurrently with the flow of the Self, but is not completely unified with It. In such an absorbed state of the Soul, the great lustrous

[2]*Mathnavi*, Bk. II, ll. 57–8

mind (*tejaḥpati Brahmā*), who is then resting in the lotus-like navel (*nābhi-kamale*) of Viṣṇu, can well understand in his calm stillness what is really happening between the two (apparently) contradictory lives — the material and the spiritual. And the great mind then fully realizes that there yet remain so many unsatisfied desires of his soul, which, though inactive in its present state, are really active like Madhu and Kaiṭava, who appear before his vision. But the mind can only visualize; it is the *prāṇa* that has to act. For this reason the mind implores the help of *Mahāmāyā* to inspire *prāṇa* to action. Really there is no separation between Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Īśāna, all of whom are evolved out of One Great Illusion, that can never be described; yet, if that One is to be described, It may only be named *Mahāmāya*. And through this Illusion the mind is inspiring life to take action to protect it from the grasp of Madhu and Kaiṭava.

Rising from his *Yoga-nidrā*, or absorption in the Self, Hari fought with Madhu-Kaiṭava, as already referred to, for *pañcavarṣasahasrāṇi*. Oridinarily the Sanskrit phrase will mean five thousand years, or a period of long duration; but, spiritually interpreted, it may mean the five elements of the carnal soul, with numerous outflows based on space and time. *Varṣa* may denote both time and region of space. Madhu-Kaiṭava is really evolved out of time and space, with which are related all desires, both material and spiritual. So long as the mind is in action we take into account space and time.

The divine warfare is now between Hari and Madhu-Kaiṭava. Hari is One that can cause all multiplicity to subside; and Madhu-Kaiṭava the dual power that finds pleasure in plurality. It is as if the *nivṛtti* and the *pravṛtti* (i.e. negative and positive, or the unifying and the individualistic) powers of the Self were contending with each other.

These two opposing forces — Unity diversified and Plurality in process towards Unity — cannot come to a compromise, especially when the former is emboldened by its egotism, if it be not that the Self comes into the midst and deludes the apparently more powerful separative tendencies into offering the apparently weaker unifying power (as these must respectively appear on the plane of manifested illusion) a reckless boon.

Madhu-Kaiṭava is overpowered by the intrinsic quality of Keśava, meaning one who is floating like a *śava* (or dead body) on the waters of causation — the quality which, though apparently inactive, can never be overcome by any other power, into however many forces it may be differentiated. Again, in this concurrent flow of the *nivṛtti*-state, Madhu and Kaiṭava are now charmed out of their separativeness into appreciating the real state of the Self which appears as the *Mahāmāyā*. Being satisfied with Its actions, they are now ready to offer Hari (from whom

they also really originate) any boon he asks for. And what can Keśava, the powerful one (*Bhagavān*), ask from them besides their destruction: for *prāṇa* is all along striving to surrender all pleasure and plurality to the Self?

How wonderful it is that Madhu and Kaiṭava submit to the desire of Viṣṇu and are killed accordingly! When the extended pleasures of the soul surrender of their own accord, what remains is the unified pleasure in the Self, of which it may be said "*Raso vai saḥ*" (He is all-love). The antagonistic powers, being now aware of the reality of the Self, desire to live permanently in the world, as waves of that ocean of love.

And what does that Lord do? Saying "Be it so," He separates with his *Sudarśana-cakra* their heads, the emblem and source of all spiritual knowledge, from the rest of their bodies, so that they may not suffer any more from the conflicts of cause and effect, or of good and evil. This *cakra* is really the symbol of the world (*jagat*) that moves. The bearer of this *Jagat-cakra* is Viṣṇu, the protector of the world. He also bears the *śaṅkha,* the symbol of the *Praṇava* (AUM) sound, from which all creation begins, and *gadā,* the symbol of all destruction. These three emblems of Viṣṇu are often represented by the holy word AUM, the emblem of the One as the Creator, Protector, and Destroyer of the world.

Viṣṇu, or Kṛṣṇa (lit., one that attracts — others to the Self), is found represented in all the scriptures of the Hindus with these three emblems. His *Sudarśana-cakra,* the moving world which is all-beautiful, has always controlled his devotees as well as antagonists. All antagonistic powers have at last been sacrificed by this *cakra* to his own Identity. Here also Lord Viṣṇu controls his (apparent) enemy in the dual form of Madhu-Kaiṭava with the aid of his ever-enchanting, all-beautiful *jagat-cakra,* so that the latter is ensnared and sacrificed at last to enter into identity with Him. And this great work of sanctifying the carnal soul can only be done in the Lord's lap, the meeting-place of creation and destruction, with no propensity to outward life. The entangled *prāṇa,* being thus released of all his propensities, becomes a free soul by giving up all conflicts of body and mind.

HARENDRA CHANDRA PAUL

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REASON in itself confounded,
Saw division grow together;
To themselves yet either neither,
Simple were so well compounded,

That it cried, "How true a twain
Seemeth this concordant one!..."

—SHAKESPEARE

K. GURU DUTT

# Society and the Individual

[Our old and esteemed friend, Shri K. Guru Dutt, writes as usual out of a careful study of the best thinking on his subject. He draws our attention to the weaknesses of the oversimple dichotomy between individual and society. He refers to the relevant results of research which remind us that many essential social influences go to the composition of a personality and, on the other hand, that the nature of a society is created by the process of communication between constituent individuals and groups. We are forced, as it were, to revise our concepts of the individual and society from the common-sense antithesis between them to a more nebulous picture in which social energies embody themselves in the individual and the individual is a nexus absorbing and radiating social processes. Readers may find it interesting to go from this to the brief note under "Ends and Sayings" which refers to Mr. J. B. Priestley's analysis of the roles of the individual, the region, the nation, and international civilization.—ED.]

"SOCIETY" AND "THE INDIVIDUAL" constitute a potent pair of abstractions, the antithesis between which has dominated the minds of thinkers and inclined them to become partisans of one or the other, and led to cults of extreme individualism on the one hand and total collectivism on the other. In a manner of speaking it may be said that the dichotomy of the world today into two opposed camps is in the main attributable to this ideological division. My theme is that the recognition of the role of small vital human groups is slowly coming to be recognized as a bridge between the two. Such is the convergence of much recent thought.

We may proceed to review briefly the historical development of these two schools of thought in the West. The cult of individualism is one of those remarkable historical myths which have pervaded Western thought ever since the Renaissance. Burckhardt, the famous historian of the Italian Renaissance, has traced the beginnings of this cult, when European man, who had hitherto been "conscious of himself only as a member of a race, people, party, family or corporation, at length became a spiritual individual and recognized himself as such." Of course, this statement needs some modification, because medieval man had always thought of himself very much as an individual in his relationship to God and to salvation. The new individualism had particular reference to his secular and social status.

Later on, the idea got linked up with the rise of capitalism and of Protestantism, with the Industrial Revolution, and the economic doctrines of *laissez faire*. The rights of man proclaimed by the French Revolution were the rights of the individual. Individualism was the basis of

the nineteenth-century gospel of Utilitarianism, of which Bentham and Mill were the apostles. We have the dictum of John Stuart Mill, the classical individualist: "Men are not, when brought together, converted into another kind of substance."

When Mill said that, individualism was at its height. But people were not slow to see the fallacy involved in his standpoint. It lies in supposing that men existed or had any kind of substance before "being brought together." Every human being is born into a society and from his earliest years is moulded by that society. From the moment of birth, the world gets to work on us and transforms us from merely biological units into social units. The language we speak is not an individual acquisition, but a social inheritance from the group in which we grow up. Both language and environment help to determine the character of our thoughts and our earliest ideas. Apart from society, the individual would be both speechless and mindless.

But already, the seeds of socialism were in the air, and can be detected even in Mill's own writings. Owen and Fourier were his older contemporaries, but above all there was Karl Marx (1818-83), twelve years younger, who outlived him by ten years. It was his monumental work *Das Kapital* which exerted an incalculable influence on the course of thought and events, and from which most modern forms of socialism have derived their inspiration. He was the father of communistic totalitarianism. It is needless to dilate on its implications.

It is possible that the doctrine of extreme collectivism is undergoing internal modification, but it is difficult to assess it. However, the idea of the free atomic individual, which received increasing prominence, starting from the European Renaissance, is under drastic modification, as also the philosophies, social, ethical, and political, stemming therefrom. There is an altogether new appreciation of the extent to which a man's views and judgement are bound up with his own culture. The need is more and more being realized for a certain detachment which will enable one to recognize the dominant traits of his own culture and to discount the natural bias in its favour; in other words, the need to train oneself to become "culture-conscious."

It is now recognized that "human personality always functions within the framework of a certain social and cultural setting, and it cannot be understood apart from this framework," as the eminent biologist Dobzhansky puts it. There are many such frameworks, each with its own individuality. Cultures are being visualized as integrated and articulate wholes, and are being studied accordingly, the psychological concepts hitherto reserved for individuals being applied to groups. Each culture stands out as an intrinsically valid pattern of life co-existing with others,

and not to be evaluated by the standards of another culture. The older methods of the study and comparison of isolated traits have been wholly abandoned.

This revolution of outlook in the social sciences is comparable to what has happened in the natural sciences. In physics, for example, the absolute and independent space and time of Newton have given place to the interdependent space-time and relativity of Einstein. A new field-physics has come into being, displacing the notion of isolated particles exerting force at a distance. And then, there is the strange Quantum theory. Similarly, in the social sciences too, the reign of absolutistic standards is at an end, and society is coming to be pictured as a field of transpersonal relations, rather than as made up of isolated individuals acting in freedom, and a new understanding is emerging of social groups as "quanta" whose behaviour is to be studied as if they were the ultimate units.

Underlying these two notions of "culture" (in the anthropological sense) and "groups" is the factor of "communication," which is perhaps the most important of the three. Communication must be understood in a comprehensive way so as to include all those processes, conscious and unconscious, intentional and unintentional, understood and not understood, which operate between people in a group. The close linguistic affinity between the words *communication, community,* and *communion* is highly significant.

Elton Mayo (in *Social Problems of an Industrial Civilization*) defines communication on a more matter-of-fact level as a free flow of ideas through structured channels *within* groups of all sizes, and *between* groups, up to the great national and international units, and compares it to the circulation of the blood. He traces the major troubles of modern civilization to blocked communication, which in the individual may be the chief cause of mental breakdown, and in a group may cause conflicts of any degree of violence.

From another angle, Edward Sapir, an authority on linguistics, describes communication as a highly intricate network of partial or complete understandings, which holds society together. He suggests that *relations* between people are the important thing, not in static configurations, but in patterns that are active and changing. Psychiatrists are employing the concept of communication as the key to the resolution of pathological tensions in groups as well as individuals.

Within the last few decades, an altogether new discipline, "Semantics," has been developed in order to study and improve processes of communication at all levels which holds out great promise for the future. The findings of semanticists are fully in keeping with those of anthropologists

such as Malinowski that language, far from simply expressing thoughts, actually determines the character of the reality apprehended. Sociologists like Lundberg and psychiatrists like Norman Cameron agree with them. Thus the latter says: "Although for convenience we shall have to make a distinction between language, behaviour, and thinking, in practice it is often exceedingly difficult to say when one begins and the other leaves off."

These three notions of culture, communication, and the group may at first sight appear to be a familiar enough set of ideas; but their crucial bearing on the understanding of the relations between society and the individual was realized only after intensive field studies during the last few decades. American investigators have contributed largely towards this changed orientation. Among prominent names may be mentioned Lewis H. Morgan, Franz Boas, A. C. Haddon, Ruth Benedict, and Margaret Read.

Taken together, these ideas constitute a closely interlinked constellation providing the key to the comprehension of human behaviour at all levels. They cannot be treated in isolation from each other. Culture always presupposes a group, and there can be no group in the absence of communication. Of course, by culture we here mean not the accomplishments of an individual, but the complex of customs, standards, and ideas which bind men together, constituting a coherent pattern of belief and action with characteristic purposes which are not necessarily shared by other types of society.

We may now examine in greater detail the concept of the group, which forms the substratum of culture and which is the live nexus between society and the individual. The discovery of the function of the group seems to have come with a shock of revelation to sociologists. Thus Durkheim, the well-known French savant, went to the length of asserting that "the individual does not exist!" Kroeber has attributed to the group a super-organic structure responsible for the cultural process. McDougall introduced the concepts of the "group mind" and the "group spirit," which, however, have not found favour with scientific workers because of their mystical flavour. Gestalt psychology has taken a more sober view of the situation and explained how the social whole is more than the sum of its parts, just as the qualities of a molecule differ from those of its constituent atoms. The consensus of opinion today is that culture is something transcending the bounds of what individuals have willed and created, and that a group is mainly fed by tradition, that it is "time-binding" and has a unity which justifies its being treated as an organic whole. Indeed the group is now regarded as a transpersonal network of relationships, and the individual as the nodal point suspended in it, at

the intersection, as it were, of the lines of force.

More concretely, the family is the prototype of all natural groups. Recent studies converge to stress its role as the seedbed as well as the carrier of culture. Specialists are unanimous about the prime need for affection and security in the early years, which only the family can provide, and the lack of which may eventually lead to the mental hospital or to mass hysteria and war. Views on marriage are also seen to be veering round in line with this.

Next to the family, and concentric with it, comes the group or small community, which is its natural extension. As Gustav Thibon, the noted French thinker, has pointed out (in *Back to Reality*) man is not made for either solitude or multitude, but is meant to live in small living groups. In solitude, the self hardens, but in multitude it dissolves: hence the need for what he calls a "well-ventilated" society, and for "decentralization." This is the feeling in France after the Second World War.

At the other end in America, the sociologist Ralph Linton believes that the disintegration of the small community in a mass-production society is confronting the modern West with its gravest problem: that of finding a substitute (*The Study of Man*).

Erich Fromm, the well-known psychologist, diagnoses (in *The Fear of Freedom*) that individual man in Western society is finding his "freedom" oppressive and unbearable, and that he is succumbing to the false lure of collectivism, over a large part of the globe. In his anxiety to escape from the burden of isolation he is flying into the arms of something to which he can "belong" and in which he can merge himself.

At the same time, there is the dawn of a faint hope that there may yet be a third alternative which makes it possible to have a self-realization which simultaneously serves the individual as well as the group. This, for example, is the thesis of the Norwegian Quaker, Wilhelm Aarek, in his profound little book, *From Loneliness to Fellowship*. He says that the pressing need is for numbers of small groups where men can experience fellowship and meaningfulness, and which in the long run will be able to give the large inevitable secondary groupings their life and content. Similarly, Herbert Agar, the Australian scientist, points out that the interplay between small groups of men exercises a moderating influence on the behaviour of nations. He thinks that, in huge modern monolithic societies, the "crowd" never breaks up: it has no groups to return to, nothing to introduce sanity and order and discipline into its over-excited mind.

Some of the recent trends in thinking about society and the individual must now be fairly obvious. Their implications for ethics, religion, and philosophy are wide and deep, but we cannot go into them here. A single

instance will suffice: Martin Buber, the great Jewish thinker who died some time ago, ascribes primary importance to personal relationships. Adapting the words of the Fourth Gospel, he declares: "In the beginning was the relation." In his famous books, *I and Thou,* and *Between Man and Man,* to name only two suggestive titles, he designates the fundamental fact of communication between two persons (the smallest group) by the term "dialogue" and makes it the prototype of the relation between man and God, the highest type of communion open to man.

K. GURU DUTT

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## Olympiad

I thought to climb Olympus,
scale the heights of rare sublimity;
but at the foothills bruised my tender feet:
so, nothing fleet,
resumed my dwelling 'neath a sheltering tree.
There, in its rearmost part, upon a couch I lay,
wrapped in dismay,
and sobbed my shame away.

My will once more alert,
I rose my fast to break,
and food I had prepared
to breast the upper air
ate in that obscure place.
What mystery! what grace!
Made strong to roam the peopled plain below,
I sang a song of high resolve, begotten so!

—WILLIAM EWART WALKER

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INDRA CHANDRA SHASTRI

# Pratikramana: The Daily Ritual of the Jainas

[Our old friend Dr. Indra Chandra Shastri, M.A., PH.D., of the University of Delhi, once again contributes an accurately informative article on the philosophy and practice of Jainism. The ritual of retrospection which he describes in detail is evidently based on a profound truth: that man as the soul needs to examine and correct both continually and periodically the behaviour of his merely mortal personality. Vigilance, as the great Buddha said, is the way to immortality.—ED.]

EVERY RELIGION prescribes a particular daily ritual to its followers, which speaks for its main approach. For instance, Vedic tradition enjoins *Sandhyā* as a daily practice. It is a worship of God in the form of the sun, pervading the three regions of earth, space, and heaven. The devotee asks God, the lord of lights, for illumination of his mind. This prayer signifies two things: first, that God is all-pervading and the light of all lights; and secondly that He is the unfolder of wisdom, which is the hidden essence of everyone. These Vedic sages worshipped God in the form of the sun.

In another ancient Hindu prayer the devotee asks, "Lead me from non-existence to existence, from darkness to light, from death to immortality." Existence means power; light means knowledge; and immortality means happiness. God is described as *"Sacchidānanda,"* the embodiment of threefold perfection. He is not different from the individual. The *jīva* and the *Īśwara* are two states of the same reality, one imperfect and the other perfect. The imperfect seeks for the realization of the perfect within.

Other systems present a different picture. In Christianity the devotee approaches God with a sense of guilt and penitence, and asks for His mercy and forgiveness. God is different from the devotee. He is the almighty ruler. Islam also holds a similar view: its *Namaz* (salutation) and *Toba* (penitence) mean the same thing. The devotional schools in India also uphold a similar view.

In Jainism the daily practice enjoined is known as *Pratikramaṇa,* which means retracing or retrospection. The aspirant is enjoined to review his activities every morning and evening. He enumerates his vows and takes into account possible slips or mistakes, repents for them, and resolves not to repeat them as far as possible.

Monks observe *Pratikramaṇa* twice daily, early in the morning and after the sunset. Lay devotees also observe it as frequently as possible. It has five periodical varieties: (1) *Rātrika,* introspection before sunrise

of the behaviour during the night; (2) *Daivāsika,* pertaining to the day, observed at sunset; (3) *Pākṣika,* fortnightly; (4) *Cāturmāsika,* observed after a period of four months; (5) *Sāṁvatsarika,* yearly.

This classification attunes with the ethical grades of the aspirant. The lowest grade is that of the *Samayakdṛṣti,* the person of right attitude. Roughly, it is held that a person perpetuating the passions of egoism, malice, and greed for a period of more than one year cannot claim to be a Jaina. He is *mithyādṛṣṭi,* that is, a person of perverted attitude.

The annual festival of the Jainas is known as Samvatsari or Paryushan. It is observed on the fifth day of the bright half of Bhādrapad, a lunar month of the Indian calendar, corresponding to the beginning of September. A fast is observed and all mundane activities are stopped on the day. The whole day is spent in meditation and self-observation. In the evening Jainas observe the annual *Pratikramaṇa,* which is the main part of the festival. At the end, every devotee makes an announcement of forgiveness. He says, "I pardon all living beings. Let all beings pardon me. I hold friendship with all and enmity against none." Nobody can claim to be a Jaina if he does not carry out this observance with full sincerity and honesty.

In the second grade, we have the laity which, in addition to faith, undertakes certain vows also. The first five are: non-violence, truth, honesty, chastity, and non-possession. In the case of a lay devotee they are known as *Anuvratas,* in contrast to the *Mahāvratas* observed by the monks. The subsequent three vows are *gauṇavratas* or subsidiary vows, to restrict the field of activity and thus restrain unnecessary violence. The remaining four provide for an exercise of self-purification.

The lay devotee is expected not to retain malicious feelings for more than a period of four months. He must purify his heart through the *Cāturmāsika Pratikramaṇa* every four months at least.

The third grade is associated with monks. They observe the first five vows in full. In addition they are expected to refrain from four passions and observe the restrictions prescribed in movement, eating, and other behaviour. They are expected to purify their hearts of all passions every fortnight at least. The feelings of anger, ego, etc. in their case are compared with a line drawn in water, which disappears the next moment. The aspirant, after removing even this mildest form of the passions, attains perfection, known as *Kaivalya.* He does not then need any ritual or religious observance.

The observance of *Pratikramaṇa* is divided into the following six parts.

(1) *Samayik.* It is an undertaking preceding all other practices. The

aspirant decides to keep away from all sinful activities pertaining to mind, speech, or body, and decides to devote his time to prayer, meditation, or self-observation. In the case of a monk, this is a lifelong vow. The lay devotee undertakes it for a certain period, generally one *muhurat* (forty-eight hours), at a time.

(2) *Caturviṅśati Stava,* the prayer to the twenty-four Tirthankaras. It is held to be auspicious and recited at the beginning and end of every ceremony. The text is first repeated mentally and then aloud.

(3) *Vandanā,* salutation to the preceptor and asking his permission.

(4) *Pratikramaṇa.* Here the aspirant enumerates his vows and repents for flaws, known as *aticāras.* In Jainism the transgression of a vow is classified into four grades: (*a*) *Atikrama,* desire to transgress; (*b*) *Vyatikrama,* accumulation of means and any preliminary attempt towards transgression; (*c*) *Aticāra,* minor transgression; (*d*)*Anācāra,* complete break from the accepted discipline. *Pratikramaṇa* purifies from transgressions up to the stage of *aticāra* only. In the stage of *anācāra* the vow is totally broken and the aspirant is enjoined to undertake different penances.

The list of *aticāras* associated with a lay devotee also presents a picture of society in 600 B.C. For example, the *aticāras* of the first vow, that of non-violence, are: (*a*) *bandha,* chaining cattle tightly; (*b*) *vadh,* beating harshly; (*c*) *chvicheda,* wounding or severing limbs; and (*d*) *atibhāra,* overburdening.

The second vow is related to truth. Its *aticāras* are: to give false statements in respect to (*a*) a girl, (*b*) cattle, or (*c*) land; (*d*) to cheat a depository; and (*e*) to give false witness.

The third is related to non-stealing. Its *aticāras* are: (*a*) to accept stolen property; (*b*) to appoint thieves; (*c*) to cross the limits of belligerent kingdoms; and (*d*) to practise dishonesty in weights and measures.

The fourth vow is related to sexual chastity. Its *aticāras* are to have sexual intercourse with (*a*) a concubine or (*b*) a prostitute; (*c*) unnatural satisfaction of sexual desire; (*d*) taking interest in the union of others; and (*e*) excess of sexual desire.

The fifth enjoins limitations on property. The *aticāras* are related to violating it. For instance, in regard to (*a*) land, ploughable and habitable; (*b*) cattle and slaves; (*c*) foodgrains; (*d*) gold and silver; and (*e*) jewels.

In the sixth a geographical limit is imposed on simple activities. Its *aticāras* are related to the transgression of that limit.

The seventh imposes a restriction on the objects of daily use, and the violations are enumerated as *aticāras.*

The eighth vow imposes a limit on futile activities. It also includes fifteen *karmadānas*. Occupations incurring gross violence such as burning forests, hunting, etc., are to be refrained from. The *aticāras* of this vow are related to negligence amounting to violence without any useful purpose. The remaining four vows are purificatory and the transgressions are adjusted.

The *aticāras* are first meditated upon mentally, then recited verbally, and then enumerated along with the vows. In addition, eighty-four lakhs of animal varieties are enumerated and repentance is expressed for any violent behaviour towards them. At the end, the hymn of friendship, as stated before, is repeated.

(5) *Kayotsarga*. Literally, this means the renunciation of the body. It is a practice for detachment from the body and physical necessities. The aspirant strives to forget himself and merge into meditation for a limited period. Jainism holds it to be the highest type of penance, most effective for self-purification.

In two preliminary texts, the aspirant first expresses a desire for self-examination and then a resolve to practise *Kayotsarga*. Certain exceptions are made for actions such as breathing, coughing, burping, etc., which are unavoidable.

(6) *Pratyākhyān* or abstention. At the end, the aspirant undertakes the vow of abstention. For instance, he decides to abstain from food and drink for a certain period after the sunrise, limits the number of commodities to be used during the day, and so on. This practice brings discipline into life.

INDRA CHANDRA SHASTRI

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CONSCIENCE is God's presence in man.

—EMANUEL SWEDENBORG

HERBERT BLUEN

# The Poetry of Alice Meynell

[Mr. Herbert Bluen is well known to our readers by his reflective verse. In this brief general survey of the poetry of Alice Meynell he speaks with appreciation of her tranquil and profound merits as a poet.—ED.]

FULLY TO APPRECIATE the poetry of Alice Meynell demands patience; for although she uses mostly simple words some of her poems are rather involved; but if they are not always immediately intelligible they usually reveal ultimately some exciting new aspect of truth. She is, however, never deliberately obscure and all her work is imbued with a deep sincerity. She seldom breaks conventional rules of versification and her short poems are on the whole more successful than her longer ones. The best of the former are meticulously polished and strict verbal economy enhances their beauty. She has a keen sense of the music of words and a mastery of varied rhythms. A distinguished critic and essayist, Alice Meynell had an extensive knowledge of the work of other poets and the following comments from her introduction to the 1902 selection of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poems show a generous and sympathetic understanding of a poetess whose work differs so greatly from her own:

> Her poetry has genius. It is abundant and exuberant, precipitate and immoderate; but these are faults of style, and not deficiencies of faculties.

With Christina Rossetti, however, Alice Meynell has some affinities; for the former's poetry is, like hers, strongly influenced by her religious convictions and shows the same mastery of technique; but Christina Rossetti's style is more colourful and her imagination, which reaches its zenith in "Goblin Market," is keener.

Born at Barnes, Surrey, on 14 August 1847, Alice Meynell spent much of her childhood abroad, especially in Italy. Her father, Thomas James Thompson, was wealthy and cultured, and her mother was a concert pianist and painter. Her elder sister Elizabeth was also a painter whose battle pictures won her early recognition. The two sisters were well tutored by their father and became proficient in French and Italian. Alice's early years were happy although clouded by occasional fits of melancholy due perhaps partly to her poetic temperament, partly to her somewhat secluded life. In 1877 she married the Catholic journalist Wilfrid Meynell, who was slightly her junior. The Meynells lived simply and hospitably, and, recognizing Francis Thompson's genius, rescued the author of "The Hound of Heaven" from destitution. They had eight children, one of whom died in infancy.

Some of Alice Meynell's early poems are typical adolescent effusions

marred by morbid introspection and self-dramatization. Nevertheless, "A Study," "A Letter from a Girl to Her Own Old Age," and "To a Daisy" are notable achievements. "A Study" shows narrative skill and dramatic power and "A Letter from a Girl to Her Own Old Age" foreshadows the psychological insight of some of her later poems. It is a little sad — such a theme tends to be so — but the sadness is redeemed by beauty of language:

> What part of this wild heart of mine I know not
> Will follow with thee where the great winds blow not,
> And where the young flowers of the mountain grow not.
>
> Yet let my letter with my lost thoughts in it
> Tell what the way was when thou didst begin it,
> And win with thee the goal when thou shalt win it.

"To a Daisy" is a delightful Petrarchan sonnet which is technically perfect and has all the daisy's delicate beauty. We discern in it, as in some of her other poems, the mystic's reluctance to accept the merely visible and tangible quality of things as a complete revelation of them and a psychic awareness of a state of consciousness only experienced in rare intuitive moments:

> And, I, how can I praise thee well and wide
> From where I dwell — upon the hither side?
> Thou little veil for so great mystery,
> When shall I penetrate all things and thee,
> And then look back?

Alice Meynell's mature work is almost entirely free of her earlier faults. Much of it reveals her as one who has pondered deeply on those great fundamental questions which have always puzzled and intrigued mankind and who has evolved a philosophy based on her religious convictions. Her Petrarchan sonnet "Renouncement," with its emphasis on the spiritual fulfilment of frustrated love, shows, like "To a Daisy," remarkable command of a very difficult form and has been frequently anthologized, but some people nowadays might consider it rather sentimental. A few of her poems have the gossamer texture of Walter de la Mare's, as for instance "The Shepherdess," a picturesque allegory on the conflict between good and evil in the soul, the sheep representing thoughts and the shepherdess their guardian. Most of the words in this poem are of only one or two syllables, but its very simplicity is part of its charm:

> She holds her little thoughts in sight,
> Though gay they run and leap.
> She is so circumspect and right;
> She has her soul to keep.

Some of Alice Meynell's poems show a boldness of thought surprising in a follower of an orthodox creed. "A Song of Derivations" is particularly interesting in this respect. Written in the form of a soliloquy, it is composed of question and answer. "I come from nothing," she affirms; "but from where come my undying thoughts?" Her reply, "Down through long links of death and birth," has fascinating implications and suggests an apprehension of reincarnation, as indeed do these later lines from the same poem:

> Voices I have not heard, possessed
> My own fresh songs; my thoughts are blessed
> With relics of the far unknown.

Christina Rossetti's experience of life was more limited than Alice Meynell's; for unlike the latter she never married and her poetry is to that extent likewise limited, whereas several of Alice Meynell's poems are inspired by love for her husband and children. These poems vary, however, in quality. "At Night," for instance, which is dedicated to her husband, describes her thoughts as she recalls memories of the day just over, memories which seem to her like birds approaching in flocks "The dovecote doors of sleep," the birds with the straightest and swiftest flight being her husband's words. "The Modern Mother" is a more profound poem which movingly expresses a mother's delight in her child's unexpected kiss:

> O filial light
> Strong in these childish eyes, these new, these bright
> Intelligible stars! Their rays
> Are near the constant earth, guides in the maze,
> Natural, true, keen in this dusk of days.

Sometimes her use of metaphor is particularly skilful, as for instance in "Chimes":

> Brief, on a flying night,
> From the shaken tower
> A flock of bells take flight,
> And go with the hour.

"The Watershed," written between Munich and Verona, shows her delight in beautiful scenery. In this poem she describes a journey from the "swarthy Alps" to Italy and her joy at the sight of the "unfolding South," and compares herself to a stream flowing to Italy. It is, however, in reflective poems such as "To the Body" and "Christ in the Universe" that Alice Meynell excels. In the former poem, written with great originality and insight, she muses on the body's remarkable powers:

Music, all dumb, hath trod
Into thine ear her one effectual way....

"Christ in the Universe" is very impressive, but we cannot fully appreciate such a poem unless we read it with minds unprejudiced by our personal beliefs. Christ is here seen in the light of modern man's vastly increased knowledge of the universe:

Nor, in our little day,
May His devices with the heavens be guessed,
His pilgrimage to thread the Milky Way,
Or His bestowals there be manifest.

Although some of the poetry written during the First World War was little more than patriotic jingoism, poets such as Rupert Brooke, Siegfried Sassoon, and Edmund Blunden all produced poems of outstanding merit on the theme of war, as indeed did Alice Meynell in her starkly realistic "Summer in England," in which she contrasts nature's profusion with man's inhumanity to man. She was deeply moved by the tragic fate of Nurse Edith Cavell, who assisted British soldiers to escape over the Dutch frontier from Belgium, and in "Nurse Edith Cavell" she poignantly evokes the latter's heroism in those dramatic hours before her execution by a German firing squad at 2 a.m. on 12 October 1915:

To her accustomed eyes
The midnight-morning brought not such a dread
As thrills the chance-awakened head that lies
In trivial sleep on the habitual bed.

Many poets have written on sleep, often producing poems of dreary banality. There are, however, some notable exceptions, such as Keats's "To Sleep," with which it is interesting to compare Alice Meynell's poem of the same title. Keats welcomes sleep as a gentle healer who seals the "hushed casket" of his soul; whereas Alice Meynell welcomes it for "The imbecile dreams clear out of wisdom's reach." "To Sleep" is but one instance of many in which she selects an old popular theme and succeeds in producing a poem without a single hackneyed thought or phrase.

Alice Meynell died on 27 November 1922. Her poetry is unlikely ever to have a wide public, because its appeal is intellectual rather than emotional. Popularity is, however, by no means an infallible test of excellence and her best poems still retain their freshness and vitality and have a surprising modernity.

HERBERT BLUEN

# New Books and Old

## Who Are the Parsees?*

THE QUESTION is a perfectly superfluous one in the city of Bombay, which is the chief home of the Parsees. It may be superfluous too in the large Indian cities, where there are usually small pockets of Parsees. But in the lakhs of Indian villages the word Parsee may hardly have been heard. To all educated Indians a fairly bulky volume by Shri Sohrab K. H. Katrak, a wealthy and scholarly industrialist of Karachi, will bring a good deal of information. Shri Katrak is a very public-spirited Parsee, and in spite of his busy life he has spent some twenty years in gathering material to answer the question: Who are the Parsees?

The first full-length *History of the Parsis* came as far back as 1884 from the pen of an erudite scholar, Dosabhai Framji Karaka. It is now out of print and so another volume on the subject was perhaps due, and this need has been met by Shri Katrak. His book invites comparison with Karaka's luxuriously brought-out earlier volumes. As against one chapter on the History of Persia in Karaka's volume, Shri Katrak has nine, though they are all brief. Shri Karaka's account of Parsee customs is vivid, and of Parsee notables, quite full. On the other hand Shri Katrak has given more space to the achievements of Parsees in industry and politics, which had hardly begun in 1884. Shri Karaka wrote when the Parsee community was at its zenith, and did not trouble himself about its future. Shri Katrak writes at a time when the prestige and influence of the Parsees have visibly declined, and he is worried about their future. His last two chapters, on "Parsees and the Partition" and "The Revolt of the Parsee Youth" are topical and thought-provoking.

The history of ancient Iran is of only sentimental interest to the Parsees of today. Their history in India falls into three divisions: pre-European, British, and post-Independence. In the days of the old Hindu and Muslim rulers the Parsees led a life of respectable obscurity. Only a few names stand out to relieve the monotony of humdrum agricultural life. Nairyosang Dhaval was a good Sanskrit scholar. Dastur Meherji Rana was distinguished enough to have been invited to the court of Emperor Akbar, and he so fascinated the great Emperor that he was willing to be invested with the *sudrah* and the *kusti*, the symbols of Zoroastrian baptism. There was a Talyerkhan who repaired a complicated clock of the Emperor's at Delhi.

It was only with the advent of Europeans in India that the Parsees shot into prominence. They were brokers to European firms and became wealthy. Only two were involved in politics: one Mody at the court of the Peshwas in Poona and Vicajee Taraporewalla at Hyderabad. Lowji Wadia came to India and brought the Mazagaon Dock into existence. Famous ships were built in the Bombay Dockyard and won encomiums from Nelson and other admirals. Camas and Dadyseths and Batliwallas (Sir Jamsetji Jeejeebhai's family) made huge fortunes out of trade with China. The Petits and the Wadias made a great name in the textile industry.

The Parsees were the earliest to take advantage of English education in Western India. Dadabhai Naoroji was a name to conjure with, not merely as a Parsee professor but as a leading Indian patriot who was elected a member of

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* *Who Are the Parsees?*. By SOHRAB K. H. KATRAK. (Author, Karachi. 310 pp. 1965. Rs. 20.00)

the House of Commons in England and was the first to speak of *Swarāj* for India. Sir Pherozeshah Mehta and Sir Dinshah Watcha were other stalwarts in the field of national politics. Jamshedji Tata was a man of vision and became an industrial pioneer and a patron of scientific research.

With their inborn adaptability Parsees made full use of the opportunity to take to the professions of doctor, lawyer, engineer, teacher, journalist, writer, and actor, and produced top men in all of them. They have contributed more than their share to the political awakening of the country and the winning of independence. But with the changed conditions the future of the community does not appear to be rosy. There is keener competition in the professions. In government service, too, there is keen competition and chances of appointments are growing thin as the paucity of numbers will work against them on the population basis and the growing provincialism and casteism have reduced their chances of employment. The ease with which a Parsee of Shri Khurshed Nariman's eminence was passed over when he should have become the first Chief Minister of Bombay has been bemoaned by a patriot like Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. But the injustice still continues to rankle, for it cannot but have repercussions.

Rapid social changes have tended to affect the homogeneity of the community and Shri Katrak has taken note of these changes. For several centuries the Parsees had ceased to proselytize except to the limited extent that the law courts have permitted children of Parsee fathers and non-Parsee mothers to be admitted as Zoroastrians. With the spread of female education — Parsees were pioneers in this — opportunities of Parsee boys and girls marrying non-Parsees have greatly increased. Nor is there anything morally wrong with such marriages. Biologically they are even advantageous inasmuch as they tend to improve the racial stock. But sociologically such marriages affect the future of the community. They contribute to its quantitative dwindling and they affect adversely the ethos of the community as some of its best women are thus lost to it. This problem has been dealt with feelingly but objectively by Shri Katrak in his chapter on "The Revolt of the Parsee Youth." The conclusion to which he comes is saddening for a Parsee:

> . . . to keep the doors open for non-Zoroastrians to come into the Zoroastrian fold will definitely be tantamount to annihilating the entire community, as with the population of a mere hundred and fifty thousand in the whole world, they would get so merged into the teeming millions outside their fold, that within half a century there will be no more Parsees left in the world.

If the end of the community is as near as that, it is certainly worth while writing a book on *Who Are the Parsees?*.

Parsees are jovial and adaptable. In spite of all difficulties, they have managed to survive, and perhaps they will survive in the future too. Their capacity to earn and their will to be charitable have contributed to their general popularity. Above all there is the ethical heritage which has brought Parsees a good name. Professor F. C. Daver, a Parsee savant, has rightly observed in his Introduction to the book: "Righteousness and integrity constitute the backbone of the Zarathustrian community." Though Parsees are not all saints, they have by and large maintained a certain moral integrity of which they can be justly proud. More than fifty years ago, in my student days in England, I remember Dr. Brown, a celebrated Persian and Arabic scholar, telling us that only Zoroastrians were appointed as gardeners in the *Zenana* (women's) portion of royal palaces in Iran. In the banking industry, whether in India or in Pakistan, Parsees are still in demand. It is a matter of pride that among industrialists the Tatas and the Wadias particularly enjoy a high reputation for probity even among income-tax officials. It may be taken as a sign of decay that the old adventurous spirit

is fast dying out. It is a tragedy that Parsee youth of both sexes is so enamoured of the glamorous dancing halls and cinemas and clubs that they fight shy of leaving Bombay to carve out careers all over India.

No Parsee worth the name can wish to see the record of his work tarnished or to view without a deep pang of regret the possibility of the end of his community in a world which is becoming one. But so long as it exists, one would wish that the community continued that record of integrity and achievement which has made the name of the Parsees so famous.

Shri Katrak may rest assured that his fellow Parsees in India and in Pakistan and Indians and Pakistanis in general will appreciate his answer to the question, Who are the Parsees? given in all sincerity and with the zeal of an earnest scholar.

A. R. WADIA

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*The Story of International Co-operation*. By JAMES AVERY JOYCE. Illustrations by WALTER BUEHR. (Dennis Dobson, London. 258 pp. 1964. 25*s*.); *The Co-operative Movement in the World Today*. By HEBE SPAULL. (Barrie and Rockliff, London. 144 pp. Illustrated. 1965. 15*s*.)

The year 1965 was designated by the United Nations (following up a suggestion of the late Pandit Nehru) as International Co-operation Year. Now it has come and gone, and to all appearances we are still at square one in the "peace game," while the "war game" gets ever more sophisticated and dangerous, and the number of players increases. Looking at the pattern of international relations, we may well despair. On the one hand, the "great powers" glare at each other behind their barricades of bombs; on the other hand, the new and weaker powers, independent but no more mature than their former masters, seem incapable of offering any better example. Must every country re-enact in turn the postures of aggressive nationalism before we can hope to unite in peace? If that is so, we shall never unite and are doomed to chase each other's tails in perpetuity — or until the tension is broken, once and for all, by the ultimate explosion.

That is one picture of the world. But of course it is not the only one. If International Co-operation Year achieved nothing else, it gave impetus to the publication of a number of books which have sought deliberately to point out the possibilities that do exist, and can be realized, in the direction of peaceful co-operation. The two books under review are both excellent examples of the many levels of co-operation, distinct but complementary, which have in fact been functioning since the beginning of civilized life. If we tend to overlook them, it is probably because they were never made plain to us in our school history books.

*The Story of International Co-operation* (with a Foreword by U Thant, Secretary-General of the UN) does a good deal to fill this gap. It is a simplified but very lucid history of man's political progress from the tribe to the nation-state — where he has so far got stuck; and of his much greater progress, at the functional level, towards the making of "one world." At the conclusion of each chapter Mr. Joyce hammers home his message with an apt little homily — of the Roman Empire, for instance, he says: "Good communications bring men together, but good citizenship keeps them together"; the explorers and inventors illustrate the maxim: "Men can make the best of their world by pooling their brains and efforts." Self-evident, one would think; but not apparently to the rulers of the world. The third part of the book is devoted to the international machinery of co-operation, with an excellent account of the rise and fall of the League of Nations and some exciting glimpses into the truly limitless potential for good of the UN specialized agencies.

Why *don't* we co-operate more, when it is so obviously in everybody's interest to do so?

*The Co-operative Movement in the World Today* helps to answer this question. Miss Spaull, who is an expert in her subject, contents herself with a straight description — remarkable enough without embellishment — of the enormous scope and variety of the co-operative system as a means of organizing our social and economic life. With its origins in the industrialized countries of nineteenth-century Europe, the movement has spread literally across the world and now plays an important part in the economy of most of the developing countries. The Communist countries are omitted from this survey, but on the evidence presented we can only wonder, again, why the system has not been universally adopted and why we have as yet no fully co-operative state (the Communists might claim that they have). What is the snag, when the benefits of co-operation are so obvious and tangible, in terms of increased production, reduced costs, and the general amelioration of social life? The answer can only be that the co-operative as so far developed has not proved adequate to meet all the needs of human nature. We can blame human nature, rather than the system, for this, but that does not remove the obstacle!

Taken together, these books offer two important lessons. One, that "international co-operation," if it is to mean more than a pious hope, must be grounded in a specific system of social and economic organization. Two, that the system we have in the "co-operative movement" is still only in its infancy, a mere babe of the twentieth century, and that we must look a little further and deeper if the two concepts are to be fruitfully joined.

MARGARET TIMS

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*The Seventh Solitude: Man's Isolation in Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky and Nietzsche.* By RALPH HARPER. (The Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A. 153 pp. 1965. $4.50)

The theme of this study is "metaphysical homelessness" as exemplified in the outlook of the three great solitaries of the nineteenth century named in the subtitle. Stendhal, at the commencement of the century, provides the contrasting background, and Kafka highlights the difference between the mood of our own century and its predecessor's. It was in the nineteenth century that the two radical alternatives confronting man were visualized in all their starkness, and the man who first described them — eternity and despair — was Kierkegaard. He suffered most acutely from the tension between the two, but his understanding was weighted in favour of the former.

Nietzsche was the radical nihilist who shut the door tight against all other alternatives. Dostoevsky's stand was midway between these two, on the threshold between the Christian world and the world of self-destruction. He was closer to Nietzsche, but he had at heart the nostalgia for unity, justice, and earth. He had not time to exploit it fully; and this is what this book sets out to do: "to return to the dead ends of nihilism and search its chambers for unnoticed exits." The author believes that although a great deal of artistic and philosophical effort has been expended on exploring the consequences of a radical nihilism, little has been done in "the country of nostalgia." He boldly ventures into it.

He does this in the last essay on St. Augustine and Proust. Although styled an Appendix, it is in reality the most original and interesting part of the book. Here he recalls two "perennial alternatives" — the passion for God and the passion for the creation. But, as can be guessed, the author's bias is heavily for St. Augustine. Of Proust he says, "He lacked the power for the vision of God, but not the power for the vision of man," and comments that the vision of

man is incomplete without the vision of God — that is the Augustinian wisdom.

For a reader who has not a thorough familiarity with the works of the three principal authors dealt with, it would be difficult to follow the close analysis of their ideas. Our author understands Dostoevsky with greater sympathy than he does Nietzsche and deems him "more helpful to us who would seek a way out of the world of Nietzsche in which we have been placed." It would be well worth while to examine his critique of Nietzsche in detail, but that is beyond the scope of a short review like the present one. We must remain content with saying that there certainly are alternatives to the Christian view of "eternity," and that for all his so-called nihilism, Nietzsche has a positive side, which although not explicitly set out, opens up new vistas of freedom. Some hints of this could be gathered, for example, from the essay on Nietzsche by the late Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy. But apart from this, this book is a valuable contribution to the study of the roots of contemporary religious and philosophical ideas, in the recent past.

K. GURU DUTT

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*Albert Schweitzer's Gift of Friendship*. By ERICA ANDERSON. (Robert Hale, London. 143 pp. Illustrated. 1966. 25*s*.)

The title of this book, *Albert Schweitzer's Gift of Friendship*, sets the keynote. Mrs. Anderson does not give us learned dissertations on Schweitzer as a philosopher, as a musician, or as a theologian. Instead, she gives us a vivid picture of the man, *le Grand Docteur* at Lambaréné — a remarkable and lovable personality.

True, we get glimpses of him as philosopher, musician and theologian, but it is with the man himself that Mrs. Anderson is concerned. As she went to Lambaréné eighteen times in all, and also persuaded Schweitzer to allow her to make a documentary film of his life, she had ample opportunity of getting to know the real Schweitzer, and this "real" Schweitzer she has portrayed both in words and by the pictures in her book. The photography is outstanding but this is to be expected as Mrs. Anderson is a noted photographer. The pictures show Schweitzer in many situations, and in many moods: at Lambaréné attending (not taking, please note) a Sunday morning service; holding the baby antelope, Jean Baptiste, in his arms (both he and the antelope looking very pleased with themselves); in the operating theatre; in the little church at Günsbach, listening to the tape recording of some music he had just played on the organ; and many, many more. The book is worth its price for the pictures alone.

Having read the book and "sensed" the pictures we can feel that we have actually met and now know *le Grand Docteur*. For this privilege we are indeed grateful to Mrs. Anderson.

C. BERNARD

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*Cultural History from the Matsya Purāṇa*. By S. G. KANTAWALA. (Research Series, Vol. VIII. M. S. University of Baroda. 477 pp. 1965. Rs. 20.00)

So painstaking and well-informed a student as Shri S. G. Kantawala has bestowed his full attention on an analytical study of the *Matsya Purāṇa*. The result is an extremely informative and well-documented bulky tome, which students of ancient learning and culture will love to possess.

Of the eighteen main Purāṇas traditionally associated with the name of Vyāsa as omniscient editor, the *Mastsya* is the fifth. From its contents, too, it seems to be quite old, as it has at the outset the story of the great deluge. It is here that Viṣṇu assumes the form of a fish (=*Matsya*) as his first incarnation, to save Manu.

But there are many episodes from

the *Mahābhārata* retold here without much change, like those of Kacha-Devayāni, Yayāti-Nahuṣa, Sāvitrī-Satyavān, etc. In addition, the descriptive chapters include those on fasts and ceremonies, gifts and donations, and the religious and spiritual importance of Prayaga (Allahabad), of Kashi (Banaras), and of the Narmada. A section is devoted to describing the duties of a royal head. The building of houses and temples, and the making of icons too, have found place in the body of the *Matsya Purāṇa*.

The Purāṇa, to deserve the title, must necessarily tell the story of the "birth of the earth," of the deluge, and list the families of sages and rulers. In addition, the beginning of a new life (after the deluge) and lives of prominent kings have to be included to complete the narrative. This fivefold aspect of ancient lore gives the Purāṇa an importance as a source-book of history, not told directly, but indicated obliquely.

In the *Matsya purāṇa,* for instance, is to be found the genealogy of the Andhra rulers (Ch. 273) and in the earlier chapters (196-201) those of the sages Angiras, Atri, Vishvāmitra, Kashyapa, and Vasiṣṭha are given.

In spite of the bulk and the extensive variety of topics in the *Matsya Purāṇa* Shri Kantawala has done adequate justice to it.

In seven chapters and five Appendices, he covers the *Matsya Purāṇa,* leaving no important aspect out of his careful scanning. The social and political structure as gleaned from the *Matsya Purāṇa* takes Chapters II and IV, religious systems and philosophical trends are studied in the fifth and the sixth chapters. Social and economic life, the position of women, and married life are covered in two chapters, III and V.

By far the most complicated work, requiring vast reading, was the compilation of Appendix 3, geographical and ethnic data. It meant studying similar studies in other ancient books and the opinions of modern scholars, for support or for contradiction of the identification of many geographical names that find mention in the *Matsya Purāṇa*.

Shri Kantawala has stood this test well and the result is an achievement worthy of a scholar, a tome that will assure him a place among the students of ancient lore.

The exhaustive Bibliography at the beginning and the carefully prepared Index add to the utility of the volume, and a note on the editions and translations of the *Matsya Purāṇa* (pp. 446-8) takes into account translations of the text into other languages. It is amazing that this Purāṇa was translated into the Persian in 1791.

We would have loved to have the volume without its longish Errata. For a University Press, this should not be a difficult objective.

S. R. TIKEKAR

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*The Gorgeous East: One Man's India.* By RUPERT CROFT-COOKE. (W. H. Allen, London. 195 pp. 1965. 25*s*.)

Visitors to India have reported variously, almost as a rule revealing the warts of their own temperament more than the contours of the subcontinent. "Slaves of the gods," said Miss Mayo derisively; and, very recently, V. S. Naipaul found India "an area of darkness." Almost *anything* could be affirmed about India, and that would be true of some portion of India as viewed from one particular stance. India is large, and Indians seem to be able to live simultaneously in the prehistoric and also the current atomic age; hence the country and its people defy easy generalizations. Whether you see it as an area of darkness, brownness or brightness, right you are (if you think so)!

Mr. Rupert Croft-Cooke's India — just "one man's India" — has little in common with Miss Mayo's, Beverley Nichols's, Naipaul's, Koestler's, or Ronald Segal's. Mr. Croft-Cooke is no professional writer out for copy for

a best-seller; he is no propagandist determined to prove a case; he is no prophet foaming at the mouth, nc would-be redeemer yelling out his commandments. Mr. Croft-Cooke came to India in 1943 as an army man, and spent three years here exploring the wide spaces of Western and Northern India, and exchanging pulses with India's multifoliate humanity. He returned to India last year, and duly noted both the changes on the surface and the changeless sap. His book is confessedly "an essay in recollection and affection," and because his warm heart is engaged as much as his observant eye the resulting picture has life as well as lifelikeness. He has seen men and women pursuing their divers occupations in India's crowded streets and sparsely populated countryside; he has felt the genius of places and buildings; he has enjoyed the laughter of children; and he has cultivated a taste for curries and Indian dishes generally. His sense of humour never fails him; neither does his capacity for generous understanding. Belgaum — where I lived for eleven years — comes out alive in Mr. Croft-Cooke's pages; and Poona, Goa, Bombay, Delhi — they are real places too, not nightmares projected by a traveller's fevered imagination. At long last, being compelled to pronounce an opinion, Mr. Croft-Cooke says:

> Not only is the country running more efficiently than ever before but vast industrial enterprises have been started and are in full swing as I had seen here in Bombay and its surroundings. . . . In twenty years Indians have shown that they can run their country a damn sight better than we ran it. . . . I find India a happier place, less afflicted with extreme poverty and disease, and I find among its more prosperous citizens an exuberance, an independence and a genial liberalism which were certainly not obvious when I was last in the country.

It is good to hear Mr. Croft-Cooke speak in such terms, even if this should be somewhat wide of the mark; *priyamcha nānritam brūyāt* (let your speech be pleasing, so it depart not from the truth).

K. R. SRINIVASA IYENGAR

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*A Psychiatrist Discovers India.* By MEDARD BOSS. Translated from German into English by HENRY A. FREY (Oswald Wolff, London. 192 pp. 1965. 31*s.* 6*d.*)

This is an unusual book, and one which anyone who is concerned with a modern interpretation of Eastern philosophy would find interesting. In 1956, the author, who was at that time Professor of Psychotherapy at Zurich University, was invited to go for five months as guest lecturer to an Indian psychiatric clinic, and for a further month to an Indonesian University. As a psychiatrist Professor Boss had for a long time felt that there were shortcomings in Western philosophy; he therefore welcomed the invitation to India, as he could learn much during his stay.

The first half of the book describes Boss's impressions of the Indian way of life, and his psychotherapeutic work. He compares Eastern and Western habits with much care and thought, and gives an informed commentary on many aspects of Indian life. The second part of the book is mainly concerned with the author's search for sages who could impart to him something of their Ancient Wisdom. After many trials and tribulations he had considerable success in his search, both in India and Indonesia.

The book is refreshing in that the author approaches his subject with true humility and impartiality, and his comments give a clear contemporary picture of the part played by the Ancient Wisdom in the life of modern India. Boss is not blind to the contradictions in Indian life and thought which are often so apparent to the Westerner, but he attempts to show how they have arisen and why they persist.

Readers who have no interest in psy-

chiatry may find the first half of the book a little tedious, but, if so, they can easily omit parts of it and proceed to the author's account of his search for wisdom. The book is translated from the German by H. A. Frey and mention should be made of the general excellence of the translation. There are occasional strange words such as "retroascriptions," but these are rare, and the general style is pleasing.

PHYLLIS C. CROFT

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*Dreams and Dreaming*. By NORMAN MACKENZIE. (Aldus Books, London. 351 pp. Illustrated. 1965. 63*s*.)

The author of this book, a lecturer in Social Studies at the University of Sussex, has made a study of dreams as they have been recorded throughout the ages. We learn, for instance, that the Egyptians attached great importance to dreams, which played a great role in that sophisticated civilization, with its complex religious ideas, and elaborate system of government four to five thousand years ago, and most of us are familiar with the dreams of Joseph, Pharaoh, and others which are recorded in the Bible.

In ancient China and India the idea prevailed that the soul abandons the body during sleep and roams abroad at will, and the dream is the form in which the experience is registered. Consequently there, and in many similar societies in various parts of the world, people are often reluctant to wake a sleeping man. Mr. Mackenzie has obviously been at great pains to study the great variety of authorities on dreams and their interpretation down the centuries, and has come to the conclusion that Aristotle and Plato knew as much about dreams as Kant and Schopenhauer. He points out, however, that since the end of the nineteenth century three great changes have removed dream debate from speculation towards science. These are, the emergence of modern psychotherapy and development of psycho-analytic theories, recent scientific research into the nature of sleep, which has brought out new evidence on the natural process of dreaming, and finally the discovery of certain drugs which have the capacity to induce mental states similar to dreaming. The author has given adequate references to the manner in which Freud approached the nature of dreams and their interpretation, and to a somewhat lesser extent Jung's ideas on the subject are touched upon, as well as those of Adler, Stekel, and other modern psychologists. In conclusion he maintains:

> In this century, thanks to Freud and other great psychologists, we have come to take dreams seriously, and learned to regard them as one of many fantasy states that provide clues to the hidden orders and disorders of the mind.

EDWARD THORNTON

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*The Doctrine of the Buddha*. By DOLLY FACTER. (Philosophical Publishing Library, New York. xv+132 pp. 1965. $4.75)

"The Buddha came as a 'revolutionary' and not as a 'revelationary,'" says the "Epilogues," while of the practitioner of the Doctrine it says:

> If, however, you become a "revolutionary" and revolt against your own evil nature, you may say with the Buddha, "while there is one honest man practising Dhamma — truth, justice, peace (right action) will be alive in the world."

The awakening from illusion which results is termed "Escape from Unhappiness," — the path to which is shown by the Tathagata.

Quotations from original Buddhist literature (translated into English) are compared in the text with similar expressions by modern thinkers like Freud,

Krishnamurti, Erich Fromm, and others. The statements are explained by short connecting passages or by notes at the end of the chapters. Why so is stated in the "Apology?" at the beginning of the book:

> My reason (excuse) for doing this is not only to encourage awakening to Actuality (What NOW IS), for what can be more modern than the Now, but to brush aside all Authority — even that of the Buddha — by accepting his Authoritarian Statement: . . . don't accept anything. . . .

There are eight chapters which delineate the teachings of the Enlightened One on morality, suffering, the I-consciousness, Karma and Rebirth, *Nibbāṇa,* God, the Path, and Meditation. In addition there is the "Apology?" an Introduction (about the Buddha and the Dhamma), an "Epilogue," and three Appendices — on Political Psychology, the *Anatta,* and Freud's *Libido* Theory.

The treatment is simple and lucid: free from cryptic or paradoxical statements and other aids to gloss over difficult and abstruse tenets. This adds to the value of the book to those who are unfamiliar with the Buddhist philosophical traditions. For students of the philosophy and practitioners of the noble doctrine, the well-chosen extracts and the concise but illuminating comments are both helpful and satisfying.

Nothing more needs saying except:

> Roll on, O Wheel, roll on and conquer;
> Roll on for evermore!

K. R. A.

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*Of Man and God.* By ALFRED POMERANTZ. (Philosophical Library, New York. 185 pp. 1965. $4.75)

This book with an arresting title is really a rationalistic study of the Holy Bible and the Trinitarian Christian theology. Taking one after another the various tenets of the theology, the author points out the inconsistencies and misconceptions on which they are based and at the bar of Critical Reason exposes their inadequacies. His major speciality lies in his masterly comparative study of the Old and the New Testaments. He examines the significance of the terms Jehovah, Jesus, and Messiah, and points out how the doctrine which is developed out of them is self-contradictory. He examines the question of the historicity of Jesus and finds reasons to doubt the accounts of the New Testament. Analysing the individual into a monad and a human body, he suggests that true religion is best served by emphasis on the moral precepts for better living taught by the world's sages "without imputing divinity to any of them"; the new religions "will not quibble over the histories of divine personalities whether of pure spirit or of spirit manifested in the flesh." On the whole this book is a devastating study which will displease the claimants of special dispensation and of superiority for their own faith.

D. GURUMURTI

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*The Saga of the Volsungs.* Edited and Translated with Introduction, Notes, and Appendices by R. G. FINCH. (Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., London and Edinburgh. xlii+97 pp. [pp. 1-78 and 82-4 in duplicate]. 1965. 84*s.*)

This book continues the series of Nelson's Icelandic Texts started in 1957 under the capable general editorship of Professors Sigurdur Nordal and G. Turville-Petre. It follows the general pattern so that the student knows broadly what to expect. Dr. Finch's Introduction considers the background, the sources and the various analogues to the Volsunga saga, both Scandinavian and Germanic, the *Nibelungenlied* being the most famous. The major variations, Frankish, Burgundian and Aus-

trian, in the basic themes are summarized, and a survey is made of the various theories offered by scholars about the development of the different versions, that mingle and transform themselves in most complicated fashion in various regions. This intermingling has more or less baffled even Dr. Finch's acute and enthusiastic detective qualities. His final conclusion is that the *Volsunga Saga* "enshrines inherited tradition with a long history and a complex and regrettably obscure development." Though the main stories are Germanic, Scandinavian imagination may well have worked on them to give the poetry and vitality characteristic of Norse literature. He considers the historical possibilities of the saga, since Germanic heroic poetry generally has some actual personage or event at its core, but he finds also a strong element of myth, fairy-tale, and cultic ritual. An examination of immediate sources is followed by a survey of MSS., published editions and general bibliography. The Icelandic text and English translation — the latter in a straightforward virile style, with most readable dialogue — are on facing and identically numbered pages. The story is undoubtedly complex and its inconsistencies obscure and phantasmagoric, but it is easy to see how it fired the imagination of Wagner, however eclectic and arbitrary his use of it was, as Dr. Finch points out. The book concludes with three Appendices and Glossary. Though general readers will find interest in the tale, the chief value of this book is naturally to scholars.

L. MARR

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*The Jew and the Cross*. By DAGOBERT D. RUNES. (Philosophical Library, New York. 94 pp. 1965. $2.75)

This book was written, apparently, before the Vatican's recent pronouncement on the question of the guilt of the Jews in the killing of Jesus. The author does, however, quote Pope John XXIII, who expressed the opinion that "though the Romans put Him to death, the whole world denied Him and the whole world rejected Him, and it is for the whole world that He wished to die, He, their redeemer."

In eleven short chapters the book reviews the genesis and history of anti-Semitism, and pleads for a reformation of the Christian attitude to Jews:

> If the Christians are serious in their declaration and wish to put an end to religious Jew hatred, they have to stop teaching it to the young and they have to stop preaching it to the old. And while they are busy with this task, let them examine their textbooks, their hymnals, and their prayer-books, extirpate honestly and sincerely all those gratuitous, libellous remarks about the Jews, their nefariousness, their perfidy, and their accursedness.

If the book carries any weight, however, it is due to the importance of its subject rather than to the treatment given. The style is emotional and repetitive; and the author maintains throughout a cold, hard, unforgiving attitude to Christians, not in the least conducive to the enlightened response he presumably hopes for.

This is a depressing book; for it reminds one that in spite of so-called progress, true civilization has not yet begun in the world. Civilization implies, after all, refinement, not merely of material life but of thought, rising to the perception of spiritual unity as the basis of life. There is no refinement, no perception of spiritual unity visible in this book, either in its record of wrongs or in the remedy it suggests.

IRENE R. RAY

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BALDOON DHINGRA

# Leaves from a Laos Diary

[Our old friend, Shri Baldoon Dhingra, gives below his first general impressions of the Lao people. One can hear the note of affection in his words. — ED.]

THE FIRST THING that struck me about the Lao people, whether in town or village, was that no one shouts, screams, or creates the slightest disturbance. Among the people, too, is to be found a gentleness and delicacy of manner, wholly disarming. The men and women never rush — what is the hurry? And when they sit at supper they never speak with their mouths full. They do not, it would seem, suffer from the form of indigestion which is the lot of those people in East or West in the habit of gulping their food as if the various dishes would take wing.

No one knows why Laos is called the land of the Million Elephants and the White Parasol. But those who have read the Jataka stories are aware why the White Elephant is held sacred; as for the White Parasol, that is, and has been through the ages, a symbol of Kingship tempered with justice and protectiveness.

It is true the Lao ambles along, has little sense of organization, and is appalled by paper work, and that if he dislikes anything it is being hustled. "Civilization," at least in Vientiane, is catching up with them; it will make short shrift of the decencies which the true man of culture holds dear — courtesy, charm, and unruffled manners. So far the AID in this or that form has not disturbed the even tenor of Lao ways, but Vientiane, now a city of seventy thousand inhabitants, is still a cross between a large village and a town without the amenities of either. But the few hundred foreigners encumbering the Lao people with help are supplying distractions or are causing them to take shape. The sophisticated few are learning fast the tricks of the trade and "civilization" is, in a manner of speaking, "catching on." But even these modern ones love the *boun*; the bonzes and the vats cannot move along at the pace of those who are for ever chasing shadows.

Where the Lao is at his best is in entertaining people, arranging pagoda parties, and decorating things. You cannot happily chill their beaming cheerfulness: they remain undaunted in sickness or in death; their blend of shyness, beauty, simplicity, and drowsiness is enthralling if, to the so-called man of action, sometimes disconcerting. The Lao will not and cannot give to all questions a categorical "yes" or "no"; for he is fully aware that all our negatives and positives are, in the last analysis, relative. If there is anything that irritates the Westerner it is this "Oriental" attitude of having the liberty to see things differently in a world of appearances, always in a flux.

Someone once said that the Lao is more interested in decorating things with curlicues than in making headway in the world's thoroughfare. It is also true, as one person rightly remarked, that everything here is curly — the roof tops, the *naga* balustrades, the *dvarapalas*, the dances, the hand-*mudrās*, and the language too.

The Lao, they say, are descended from the legendary "Khoun Borom," who came from the skies to South China, thoughtfully equipped with the regalia necessary for the coronation, mounted on a white elephant with beautiful black lips and eyelids, with curved transparent tusks which crossed, preceded by two women and followed by a long parade of horses, elephants, oxen, water buffaloes, scholars, mandarins, soldiers, pages and musicians, and six hundred matrons and maids of honour, advancing two by two. Once Vientiane was called "the place of

sandalwood"; Luang Prabhang, where the King of Laos resides, was called the Land of Hundreds of Thousands of Cobras. It is quite true that the Laotians are extremely bad haters. I once asked one of them whether they would like to have their Emerald Buddha, a spoil of Thai victory, back from Bangkok. He merely replied: "What does it matter whether it is here or there; it is there for all to pay homage to."

I have been to several *bouns,* celebrations. All honour the previous incarnations of the Buddha. One, from which the symbol of the White Elephant also comes, honours the Blessed one when, as Prince Vessantara, he was exiled by his people because he had given away his kingdom's white elephant to save the neighbouring kingdom from drought. The *boun* can mean anything, from a festival to a party to raise money for the Pagoda, at least once a year. Since there are seventy pagodas in Vientiane and each *boun* lasts several days, the town and its relaxed and gentle people might be said to live in a constant state of *boun*. Under the string of coloured lights the girls daintily dressed in their *sins* (sarongs) glitter like fireflies in the night, their gold-embroidered borders and scarves shimmer in the lights. These young ladies, with graceful movements, half-kneeling, serve you drinks. At *bouns* everyone dances the revolving *lamvong*. According to Thao Nhouy Abhay the *lamvong* is the old bacchic carnival dance of their grandfathers spiritualized by the noble breath of the classical theatre. A young man sings:

On the back of a water buffalo in the moonlight
On the back of a water buffalo in the moonlight
I see a lovely star . . .
My heart trembles
My soul is shaken. . . .

And the girl replies:

Please don't love, don't pursue me,
I am only the smallest and humblest of reeds,
You are big, you are fair
And I am dusky.

The gestures are stylized: a hand over the heart for love; an outstretched arm for far journeys that separate; hands pressed together for prayer.

All the time I have been here — nearly five months — I have tried to find out the way of life of the Lao people, to study their attitudes and to have them talk to me. The Lao is not a thinker; rather he lives from moment to moment, taking life as it comes without too much care for the morrow. He takes his Buddhism with a sense of joy and acceptance.

The students I talked to on aspects of Lao Buddhism are largely ignorant of the sources of their philosophy. They know only a very few of the Jatakas and have practically never read the *Dhammapada,* and yet the Tripitaka, at least in part, is what every monk, whether a *maha* or not, dreams of being able to read. But the Lao more readily accepts than criticizes or discusses. Discussion or what could be argument is to him a waste of time and energy, and a Lao, as far as I have seen, conserves rather than expends his energy.

The Lao girls and boys are un-self-conscious. They are a little shy, it is true, but that is an expression of good manners. In his own personal, daily life the Lao learns to rely on himself. Servants are practically unknown and unheard of in the village. In his normal agricultural life the Lao does his work for his family, the society, and, of course, the bonzes. He catches fish, he fends for his oxen and buffaloes, fabricates fishing tackle, and serves the monks and offers them always the choicest of foods.

The monk usually repeats things without even attempting to understand them and there have been attempts, in the Institut Bouddhiques, somewhat to remedy this by making the head monks remember that the Buddha always advised people to think and to be ever watchful.

In preparing a syllabus for the baccalaureate, in keeping with the French system which obtains here, I have had to bear in mind that the course in Oriental Culture I am preparing has to be a mixture of literature and religion and philosophy. But it must, above all, be adapted to the temperament of the Lao people. In the past the students have had to stomach Descartes, Hegel, and Kant, and have never been able to chew, much less digest, any of them. The Lao people love a tale and can grasp the philosophy behind it, provided it is not too complex. Centuries of passive acceptance of ideas and doctrines have stilled the spirit of inquiry. In any case, these innocent and non-belligerent people — where even a family quarrel of a serious kind is very rare — are full of smiles. They are used to giving; so their hearts are glad, their purses slender. As I have gone about my business, I have tried to understand the Lao mind and this, more than anything else, has helped me to prepare something which, provided the teacher can convey the spirit and the material is there, will be acceptable. The educated Lao must put his own cultural values first. The Lao has been made to feel that everything he stands for has held him back from the kind of progress which is being thrust upon him. Hardly anyone knew that in a nearby vat there were some frescoes of the *Ramayana* (here known as *Pra Lax Pra Lam*), and no-one truly bothered either. Few know the stories behind the festivals illustrating the life of the Buddha. I made it a point, not without much difficulty, to study culture in town and village and by talking to a variety of people. Since there is no literary circle of any kind there are no discussions or dialogues. The people live fully in the realm of folklore, which is to them a living thing. When people come to disturb this way of life they destroy the soul of things and hand out empty words for answer. The saddest part of it all is that almost none of the people who come here know anything about the life and thought of the Laotians; there is a great gulf which divides them.

BALDOON DHINGRA

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# Ends and Sayings

" . . . ends of verse
And sayings of philosophers."

—SAMUEL BUTLER: *Hudibras*

After the Theosophical Society, with its ideal of "Universal Brotherhood," was founded at the end of the last century, its inspirer, H. P. Blavatsky, wrote that "the multiplication of local centres should be a foremost consideration," local centres, however, with a comprehensive, not a mere local outlook.

J. B. Priestley ("Wrong Ism," *New Statesman*, 25 February 1966) makes an interesting classification — regionalism, nationalism, and internationalism. For him regionalism, however little recognized, gives men their roots, their real feeling of "my country." Nationalism, masquerading as patriotism, is "largely the creation of power-men and political manipulators." Whatever value it has is derived from the rich regional loyalties. Nationalism ministers to vanity, by lavishing money on prestige projects, while necessities languish, and by bolstering up national importance by all the bureaucratic "paraphernalia" that the West is trying to drop. Internationalism (not the mere sophisticated world of luxury hotels and dubious promotions) is, he declares, world civilization, al-

ready existing in such activities as communications and transport, and medicine and some other sciences. UN special agencies and the arts (when not geared to propaganda) also work at this level. The possible danger of internationalism flattening out the rich, living variety of regionalism, he suggests, can be avoided. The real danger is the narrow, aggressive nationalism, that would rather have things done badly than done well by non-nationals.

> We need regionalism to give us roots and that very depth of feeling which nationalism unjustly and greedily claims for itself. We need internationalism to save the world and to broaden and heighten our civilization. While regional man enriches the lives that international man is already working to keep secure and healthy, national man, drunk with power, demands our loyalty, money and applause, and poisons the very air with his dangerous nonsense.

We can, perhaps, draw a parallel here with man himself. The spirit is one in all beings, the differentiation in the forms gives the rich panorama of all the creatures in manifestation. The self-conscious link between is the mind of man, dual in character. At the present time, the dominant aspect, alas! is the proud, unstable, self-centred personal mind, called "the false self," clinging to greedy desire. This projects itself in all the hateful traits of the false nationalism described. But there is the higher aspect of this same human mind — spiritual, individualized, but undivided. Just as each man can make active in himself either the higher or the lower self, so the lower nationalism, so rightly condemned by Mr. Priestley, must also have its real, higher nature, which will consciously strengthen the link between the unconscious life of regionalism and the universal light of true internationalism.

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The Commonwealth of World Citizens, with headquarters in London, was founded by Hugh Schonfield some years back. An independent attempt is now being made to give status to world citizenship, by an appeal to people to register as world citizens at the International Registry, London. This will foster the creation of world institutions able to bring public pressure to bear on those governments which, blinded by national interests, fail to cooperate, and may even hinder any movement for the peace and service of mankind as a whole. The sponsors include Lord Boyd-Orr and Bertrand Russell (Britain), Professor A. Kastler, Abbé Pierre and Jean Rostand (France), Danilo Dolci (Italy), as well as professors from Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia. Josué de Castro (Brazil), Professor Linus Pauling (U.S.A.), the Mayor of Hiroshima, and Mrs. Rajan Nehru (India) are other signatories to the appeal. If there is sufficient response delegates will be elected (though not as nationals) for the purpose of devising laws for a peaceful civilized world, as well as for making needs known and for taking defensive action against injustice.

Another example, this time in education, of a reaching to an international outlook, is the study centre now being planned near Carona in Switzerland, by the University of Sussex, with the collaboration of those of Mainz and Zürich. It has been made possible by the Celestina Foundation, under the patronage of the Council of Europe, and its purpose is to give undergraduates an education for an integrated Europe. Eric Silver (*The Guardian,* 26 March 1966) writes that professors will be drawn from different countries, and teaching will be in four languages, English, French, German, and Italian. The University of Sussex also requires students in its School of European Studies to spend a period of time on the Continent. Its School of African and Asian Studies is endeavouring to make active links with universities in India and Africa (exchange of staff, etc.) and possibly the West Indies also. The University will also be the headquarters of the British

Government's Overseas Development Institute, and it seems in every way to be one of the "growing points" for a more international influence and outlook.

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The April 1966 issue of *The Humanist* included a very useful article, "The Last Rites," by Eve Barron, with advice and information for anyone who has to cope, generally somewhat unprepared, with all the sad arrangements for the burial or cremation of relatives, friends, or even neighbours whose family is unknown. Among the specific details given are a few facts of general interest, e.g., that in Britain about five hundred acres are used up yearly for grave space, but that the nation, with an average annual increase of eight new crematoria, now has "the world's highest recorded percentage of cremations — 43 per cent." This obviously excludes countries such as India, where the burning of the body on the funeral pyre is, as for the large majority of Hindus, a custom from time immemorial, a custom that could with benefit have been adopted earlier in the West, had not the crude religious misconceptions about the raising of the body at the Day of the Last Judgement ruled it out. In Britain the Cremation Society was founded as long ago as 1874 by Sir Henry Thompson, Physician to Queen Victoria. And all those who are convinced that cremation is the best method, in every way — for the living as for the dead — of disposing of the body, the "old garments" that the soul puts off, must welcome the spread of the practice.

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Each time some new mode of communication has made its appearance — films, gramophone, wireless, television, tape recording — there has been the cry that its rivalry would harm the fundamental culture that has grown out of the reading of books. Yet each time it has been found that the relationship is supplementary rather than one of antagonism. Another example of this interaction comes into being in the co-operation between the National Book League in Britain and the Rank Organization for the making of a film about books. *The Bookseller* (26 March 1966) reports that though the N.B.L. sponsored Paul Rotha's pre-war film *Chapter and Verse,* present-day costs had proved somewhat daunting for anything of a similar nature until, happily, the Rank Organization agreed to include a film on books in its highly popular series *Look at Life* (also available for hiring). The film, scripted by Michael Ingrams and produced with the help of well-known publishers, Cambridge University Press, Bowes and Bowes of Cambridge, Penguin Books Ltd., Hazell Watson and Viney, and the Stanbrook Abbey Press, deals mainly with paperback production and with book design. It is proposed that others will follow.

Is there a lesson here for nations trying to out-rival each other in the fallacious philosophy of competition?

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